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TRACES

Edition 10, 2020

UNCOVERING AUSTRALIA'S PAST

Eaglehawk's war heroes

Capt. W. J. SYMONS, V.C.

PLUS

Perth's wicked stepmother

AND

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Welcome to the 10th edition of *Traces*!

As summer draws to a close, many of our readers will be taking stock after a catastrophic season of bushfires that has laid waste to huge swaths of the country. The *Traces* team was devastated by the unfolding destruction, and our thoughts are with any of our readers who lost a loved one, a property, a home or a way of life. The silver lining behind this very dark cloud has been the outpouring of support from Australians near and far.

While communities, charities and volunteers rally to get towns and businesses back up and running, Australia's precious heritage has not been forgotten. Indigenous communities and archaeologists fear that thousands of historic Aboriginal sites and artefacts have been damaged or destroyed by the bushfires, including ancient rock art at Carnarvon Gorge in Queensland, and a 500-year-old site at Armidale, in New South Wales. Numerous historical buildings, including a house at the Jenolan Caves site in the Blue Mountains, have also been destroyed.

In response to the tragedy, concerned and dedicated archaeologists and heritage specialists have formed Bushfire Archaeologists, a group willing to volunteer time and expertise to document archaeological and cultural heritage places that are recovering from bushfires, until more formal heritage work can take place. If your heritage organisation is looking for volunteers, or you're a heritage professional with time to donate, you can fill out the expression-of-interest form at australianarchaeologicalassociation.com.au/bushfire-archaeologists/ to help ensure our past is not forgotten.

On that note, this edition of *Traces* focuses on some forgotten, and important, histories. In Australia's Forgotten Towns (page 10), Sandy Guy uncovers some of Victoria's fascinating ghost towns, and Laura Ryan (page 14) investigates abandoned Arltunga, in the Northern Territory. In Hidden Histories, Michael Adams honours the Titanic's forgotten Australian hero (page 18), and our Australia at War section pays tribute to some young heroes (page 22), with a little insight into the ways in which women remembered men lost at war (page 24).

Of course, there is plenty more, and your regular favourites, too. Until next edition, happy reading and research. ○

Eden Cox
Consulting Editor
Traces

Letters to the editor

What you thought of Traces *edition 9*

'Cranky Bella' in edition 9 of *Traces* was a great read! I love reading about Australia's female criminals, in particular, as they often seem to be brazen, cunning and desperate. Full of character for us historians! Hard times, no doubt, but fascinating stories came out of this era. Can't wait to read about the next crim!
Francis Leatherman

Dr Kate Bagnall's article on researching Chinese families in colonial Australia really captured my attention last edition. I was really interested to learn about Chinese Australians at this time, as I have Chinese ancestors who settled in Bendigo. They must have been so brave to enter this new world as a minority community, and I am so proud to have this heritage. Dr Bagnall gave a wonderful insight into her research. Thanks for sharing.
Rebecca Lim

I'm an avid reader of *Traces*, so I was looking forward to receiving edition 9. I particularly enjoyed the article 'Violent times in colonial Yass'. Although the gore was confronting, it was interesting to read how a shoemaker and a carpenter could get up to so much trouble. The article has inspired me to put Yass on my must-visit list so I can experience the eeriness of the town. I'd love to read more about the often dark history of colonial Australia in future editions.
Coral Spencer

TRACES
UNCOVERING AUSTRALIA'S PAST

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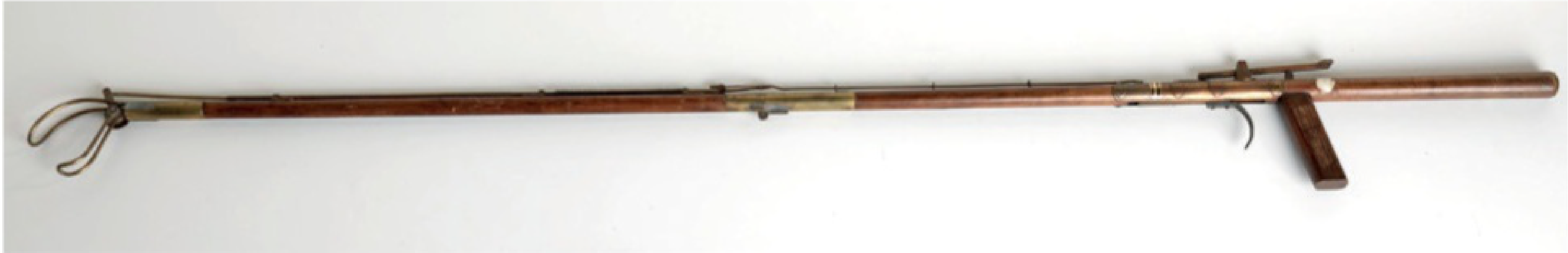

Can you guess what this edition's thingamajig is? Find the answer on page 5.

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this edition of *Traces* may contain the names and images of people who are now deceased.

H. ELLIS
DRAPER & OUTFITTER

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Heritage News

Research funding for Australian society, history and culture

The Morrison Government is funding a new research program to recognise the importance of research into Australian society, history and culture.

Minister for Education Dan Tehan announced $12 million for academics to pursue research on Australian issues, focusing on Australian culture, society and history.

'The scheme will look at the way in which we live today, and how the past has contributed to Australian society and culture, including how our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture is understood, and has impacted modern Australian society.

'We hope this new initiative will bring a greater understanding of our Australian Indigenous history, our heritage and the success of multiculturalism.'

Treasures of the Natural World landing in Melbourne

Some of the world's biggest, rarest, oldest, strangest and most fascinating treasures will be landing shortly in Melbourne. For the first time ever in Australia, London's Natural History Museum will be sharing its treasures Down Under, with the 2020 Treasures of the Natural World exhibit to be held in May.

Featuring more than 200 items from the Natural History Museum's famous collection, each item on display is significant to how we understand the natural world. Objects including some from Charles Darwin's personal collection – such as a 200-million-year-old Ichthyosaurus fossil – a Martian meteorite, the world's largest butterfly, and even a deadly flea that carried around the bubonic plague are just some of the intriguing pieces of natural history you'll see on display.

Devastating loss

While the bushfires that riddled the country over summer caused irreparable loss to communities and local wildlife, who both lost their homes – and some, their lives – the damage that these blazes have caused to Australia's Indigenous culture and heritage has yet to be fully realised.

In New South Wales, these unprecedented blazes have destroyed 500-year-old Indigenous rock art. The art in question was located on private property west of Armidale, in the Northern Tablelands region of the state. Some of the art on this site had not yet been fully documented, with the site first recorded a few months ago.

'The art site is a part of the Anaiwan cultural landscape and is directly connected to other significant art sites in the New England area,' local Anaiwan traditional owner Steven Ahoy told *The Guardian*. 'These art sites are very rare due to the fact that art sites have been highly damaged or destroyed in the past.'

Without Consent exhibition reveals the truth of Australia's past

A new exhibition, Without Consent: Australia's past adoption practices, is currently on at the State Library of South Australia. This moving exhibition, curated by the National Archives of Australia, brings to light a previously hidden aspect of Australia's past. It has offered those affected by forced adoptions the opportunity to share their experiences – some for the first time ever.

It is estimated that at least 150,000 adoptions took place from the 1950s to the 1970s, and a significant number of them were forced adoptions. Many of the women who had their babies taken were unmarried and, because of the stigma attached to unmarried mothers at the time, were often forced to live a lie for decades. For some, it was a secret they took to their graves.

The exhibition aims to show the truth – that the babies taken for adoption were dearly loved and wanted by their parents.

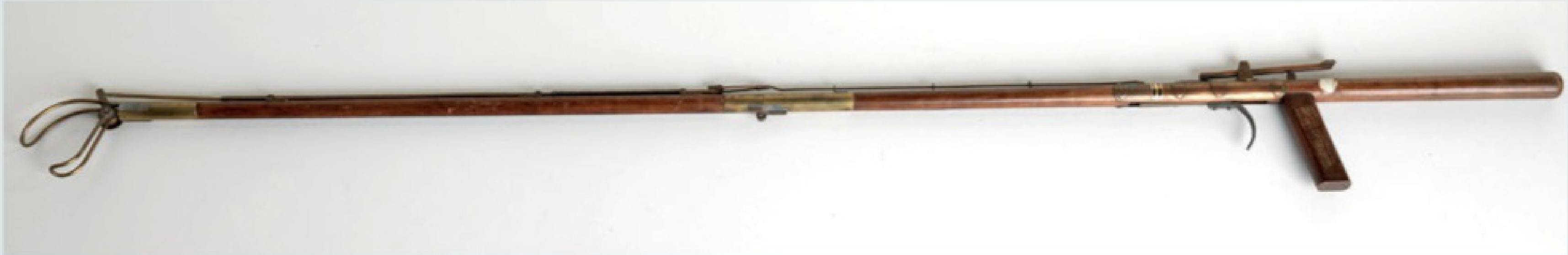
One letter in the exhibition, from a mother to her son, reads: 'I loved you so much it hurt, and I loved you much more than I loved myself; that was why I was prepared to sacrifice my happiness for yours'.

The exhibition closes on 26 April and is open daily (except public holidays). ○

Without Consent exhibition – A crèche in a large metropolitan hospital, 1953. Image courtesy of NAA – A1200, L15676

What's that thingamajig?

Answer: Snake-catching stick, circa 1920s



This wooden snake-catching stick was used by Commonwealth Serum Laboratories (CSL) Ltd., in Parkville, Victoria, in the 1920s. It was used by CSL to safely grip the back of the snake's head without injuring the animal so that it could be milked for venom. The company used the venom to produce antivenoms that could treat victims of poisonous bites. CSL was established in Australia in 1916 to provide health products, including vaccines, insulin and penicillin, to a nation isolated by war.

The snake-catching stick has a wooden handle, a metal trigger and a metal rod that is spring-tensioned and runs along the handle. There is a trigger-release mechanism located at the handle, and the other end features metal 'jaws' that snap shut, trapping the snake.

Image courtesy of Museums Victoria

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Image: Arriving in Australia on board the *Sibajak*, 1954.
NAA: A12111, 1/1954/4/23

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS BUILDING, SYDNEY

Sydney's Department of Lands building has a long association with civic life in New South Wales and is among the best surviving Victorian-era buildings in the state.

THEN

Located on Bridge Street in the Sydney CBD, this stately building was constructed in 1877 for the New South Wales Department of Lands, and was used as the organisation's administrative head office. The Department played an especially significant role during the rapid expansion of settlement during the late 1800s. The three-storey building was designed by colonial architect James Barnet and built in two stages – the first between 1876 and 1881, and the second between 1888 and 1892 under colonial architect Walter Vernon's supervision. The builder, John Young, was the first person in Sydney to build with ferro-cement – concrete slabs reinforced with metal mesh or rods.

At the time of its construction, the Department of Lands building boasted the latest office technology and features, including spiral stairs, speaking tubes, pneumatic bells, and a special room for storing city plans and maps, complete with a fireproof metal door.

On the Bridge Street facade of the building, there was the Lands Department Datum Bench Mark Plug, which marked the mean sea level and mean high-tide levels. It was set into position on the front of the building sometime between 1887 and 1894, and provided the origin of all levels in New South Wales under the Survey Co-ordination Act. The clock on the tower, and a clock system that operated throughout the building, driven electronically by a pendulum master clock – an Australian-made system that was installed by Prouds in 1938.

Sydneysiders would be well familiar with the 23 sculpted figures occupying some of the 48 niches on the building's exterior – all of explorers and politicians who contributed to the development of Australia. Architect Barnet originally proposed 48 men for commemoration in statue, but only 25 were accepted, the remainder being rejected as 'hunters or excursionists'. The men who made it into stone include Matthew Flinders, Sir Joseph Banks, and explorers Hamilton Hume and William Hovell.

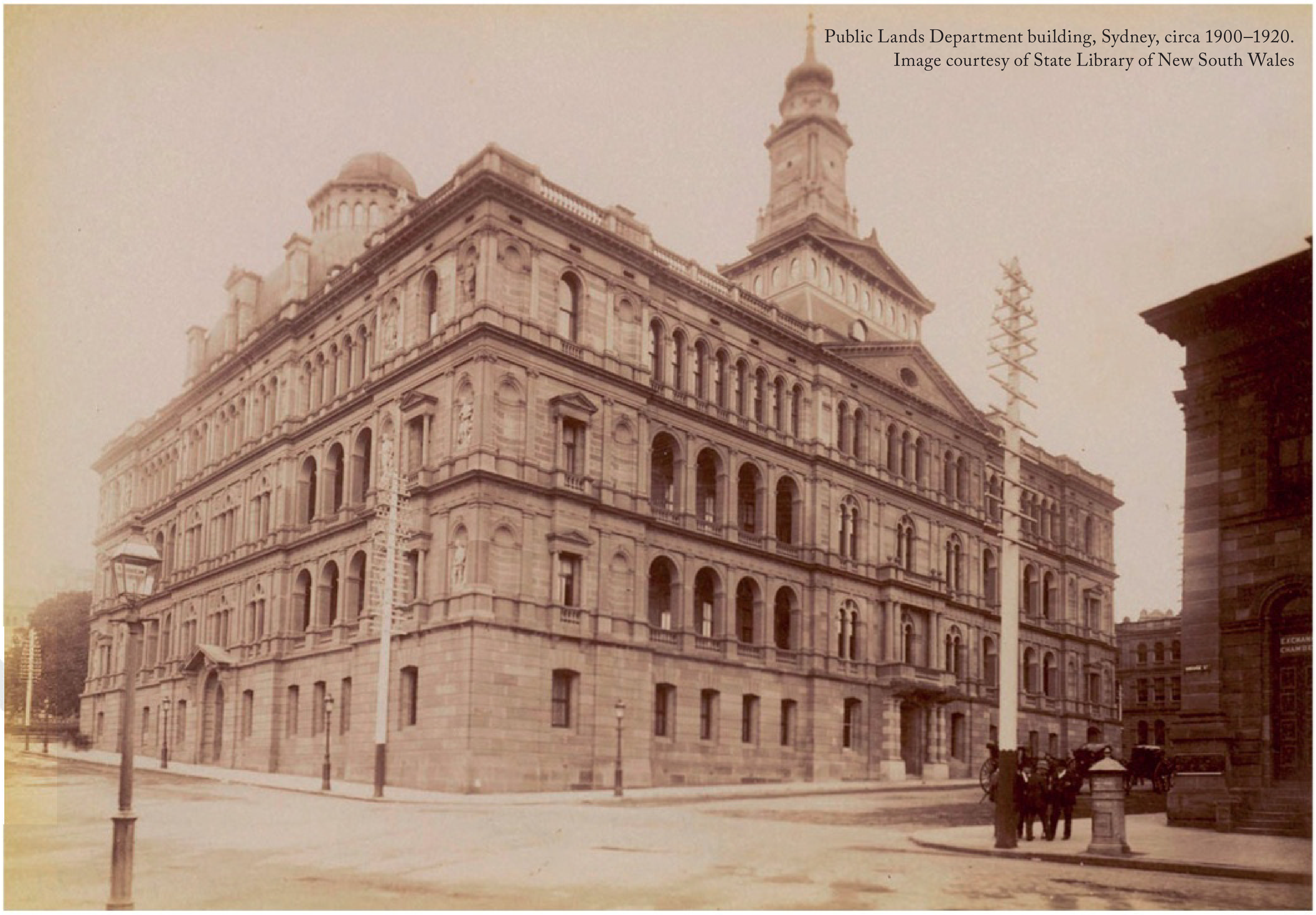
Only one new statue has been added to the facade since the original figures were installed – that of colonial surveyor James Meehan (1774–1826), who has occupied a niche on the corner of Loftus and Bent streets since 2010. After being transported to New South Wales, Meehan was pardoned for his involvement in the Irish Rebellion of 1798, and he went on to explore and measure out the towns of Sydney, Bathurst and Hobart, among others.

NOW

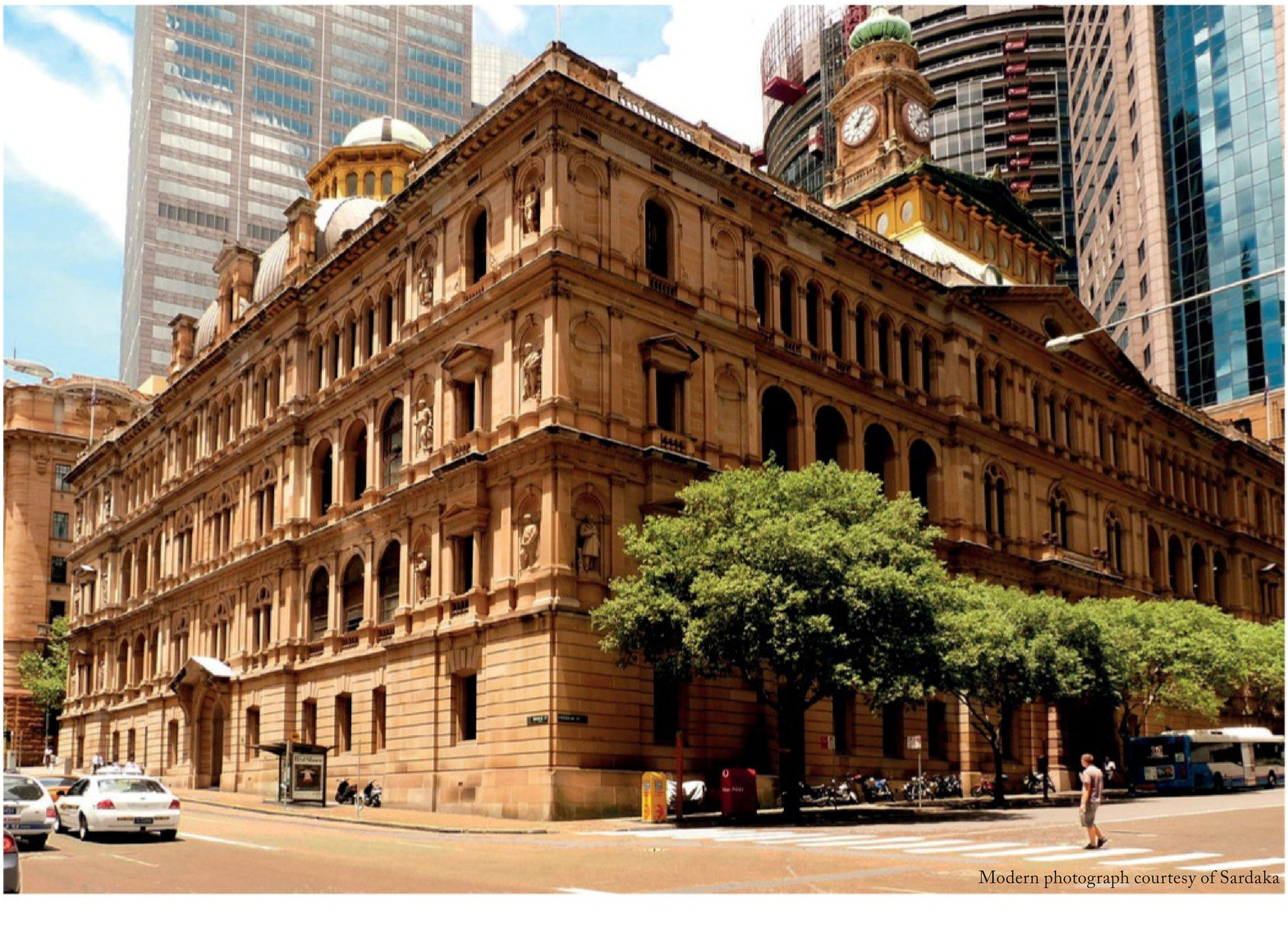
The Department of Lands building was added to the New South Wales State Heritage Register in 1999 after it narrowly escaped being converted into a casino in the late 1980s. The Heritage Council of New South Wales passed a permanent conservation order that protects the building from 'unsympathetic development'.

In 2016, the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage moved out of the building, and Singapore-based Pontiac Land Group purchased the site for $35 million, with plans to turn it into a world-leading hotel.

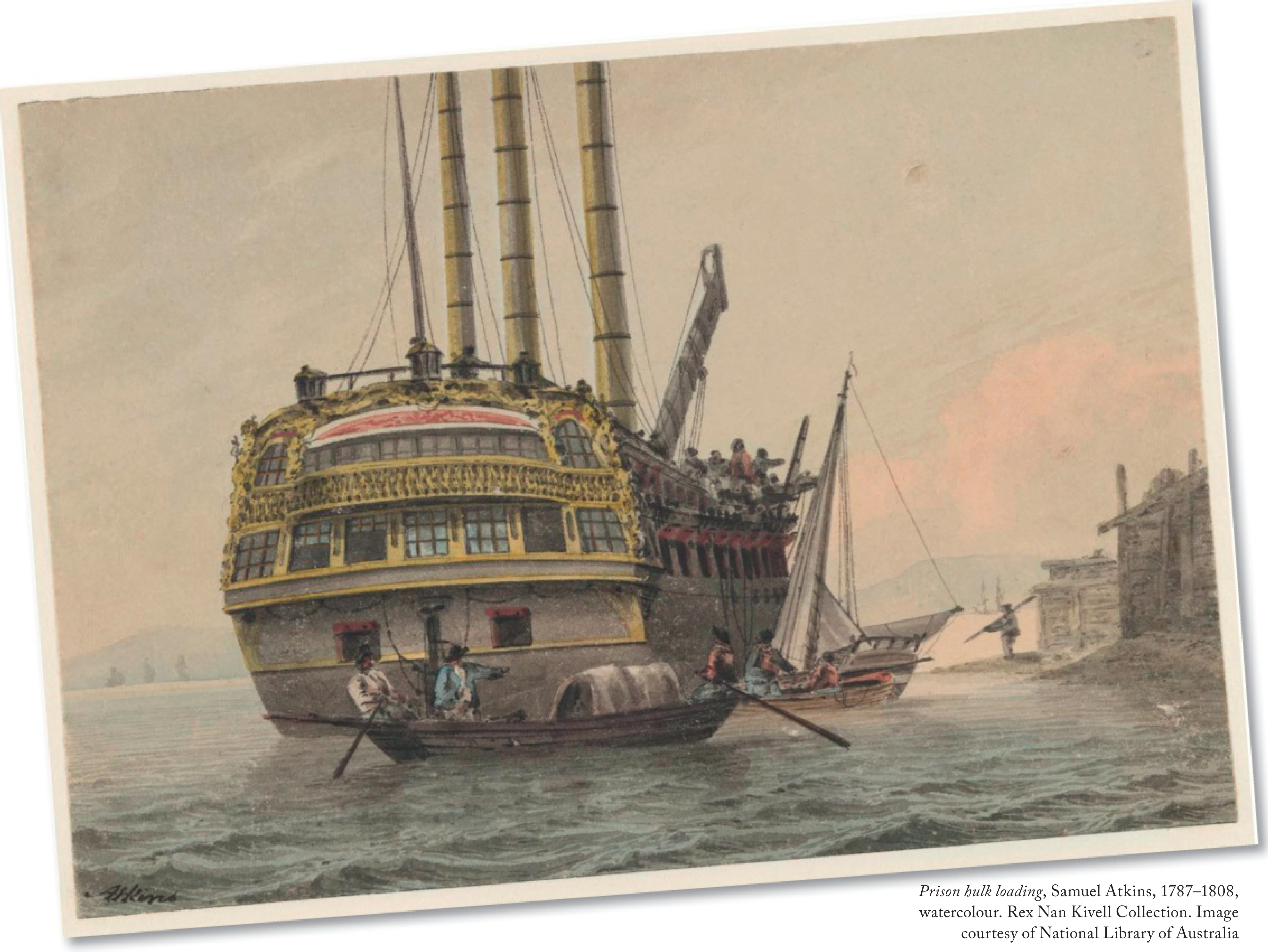
The building's redevelopment is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020, and the company has said that the building's grand features will remain intact. ○



Public Lands Department building, Sydney, circa 1900–1920.
Image courtesy of State Library of New South Wales



Modern photograph courtesy of Sardaka



Prison hulk loading, Samuel Atkins, 1787–1808, watercolour. Rex Nan Kivell Collection. Image courtesy of National Library of Australia

Australia's floating jails

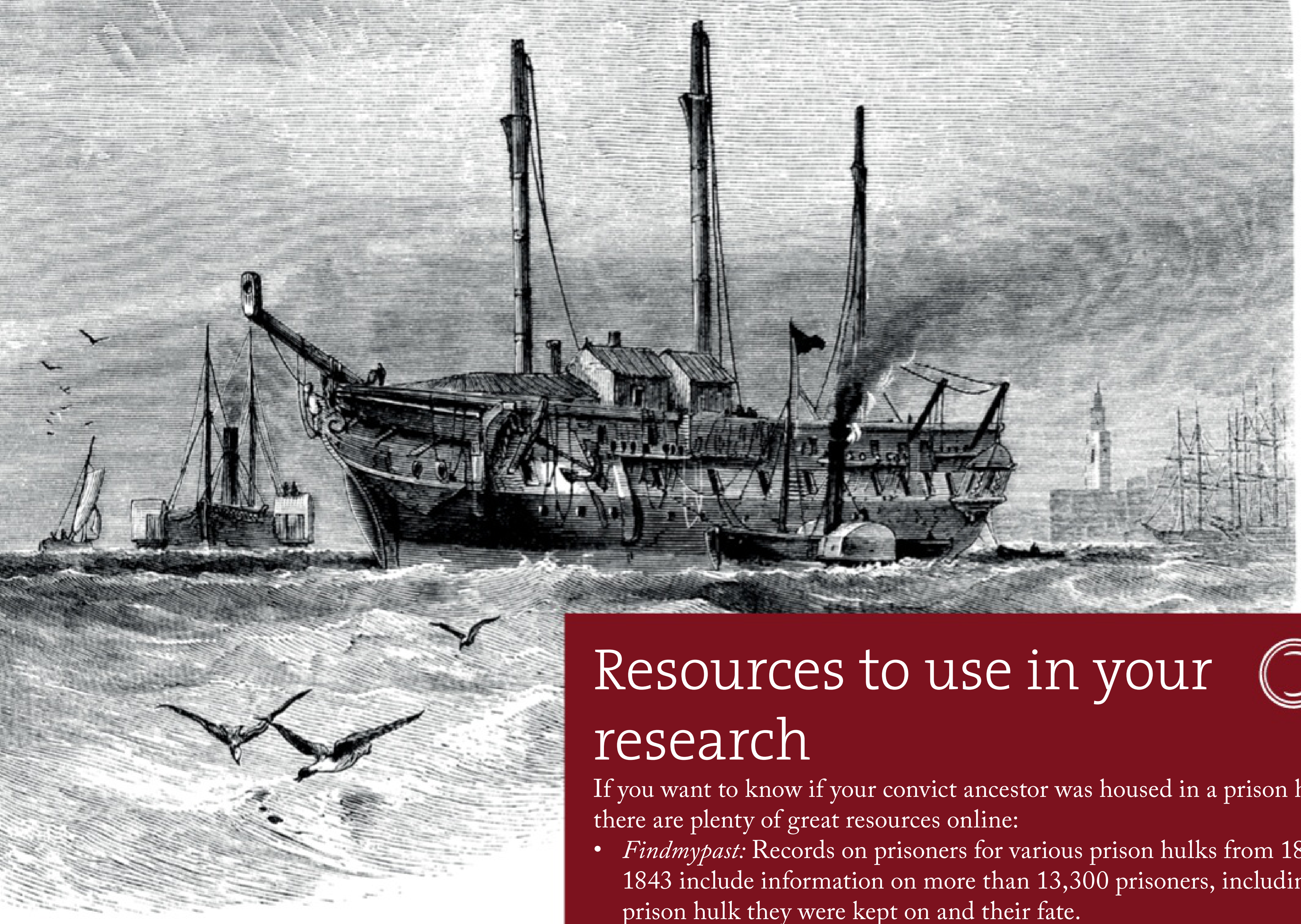
For more than 80 years, prison hulks were vital to the functioning of Australia's penal colonies. Life was tough for the prisoners who were sent to the hulks, perhaps even tougher than for those who were in prisons on land.

By Helena Melton

There is a classic narrative in Australia that convicts spent their days in penal colonies like Port Arthur and Norfolk Island, which struck fear into the hearts of convicts and settlers alike. But what many people don't know is that many convicts weren't even lucky enough to end up there. With prisons overflowing and convicts continuing to be transported to the colonies, former seagoing vessels were quickly modified to accommodate inmates.

To understand why these vessels were used in the colonies, it's important to gain an understanding of what life was like in the United Kingdom in the 18th century. Prisons in Britain were dangerously overcrowded, and after the American Revolutionary War prevented Britain from transporting any more criminals offshore to the United States, British officials were stuck – where were they going to put all their prisoners that were to be transported to the colonies?

The answer came in the form of decommissioned warships. These expansive ships could no longer be taken out to sea, and were moored in rivers and at dockyards. This made these ships the ideal accommodation for hundreds of prisoners. The ships' sails were taken down, the rigging was thrown away and the masts were removed;



Old prison hulk on the River Thames, London

Resources to use in your research

If you want to know if your convict ancestor was housed in a prison hulk, there are plenty of great resources online:

- *Findmypast:* Records on prisoners for various prison hulks from 1811 to 1843 include information on more than 13,300 prisoners, including the prison hulk they were kept on and their fate.
- *Ancestry:* Records on prisoners who were kept on prison hulks in the United Kingdom between 1802 and 1849, and prisoners kept on Australian prison hulks (through the National Library of Australia).
- *State Library of New South Wales:* Prison hulk records from the United Kingdom and quarterly financial records for British hulks.

escape was next to impossible. These ships were known as prison hulks, and they became the saving grace for the British – it was far more convenient to house the growing number of prisoners in existing prison hulks than to build expensive new prisons.

Prison hulks didn't just save the British Government money; they also had considerable benefits for many of Britain's expanding dockyards. With new technological developments, London needed workers to help transform its docks into modern, efficient transport hubs, so the prisoners were put to work on the dockyards. This work was arduous, to say the least, and the days were incredibly long. Once the prisoners had finished work on one dock, the prison hulk could be towed to the next dockyard that needed workers.

Following the English example, the colony naturally began to use prison hulks when its convict facilities became overcrowded. Hulks were the perfect way to house prisoners who had a reputation for trying to escape. If a convict committed another crime after they had arrived at the colony, they were kept in prison hulks until they could be reassigned and transported to another prison in the colony.

Both female and male prisoners were kept in prison hulks but were separated and confined to different vessels. Female convicts from the Cascade Female Factory in Van Diemen's Land were held in prison hulks once the facility became overcrowded. After female convicts had served six months aboard a prison hulk, they were assigned work as servants to families throughout the colonies.

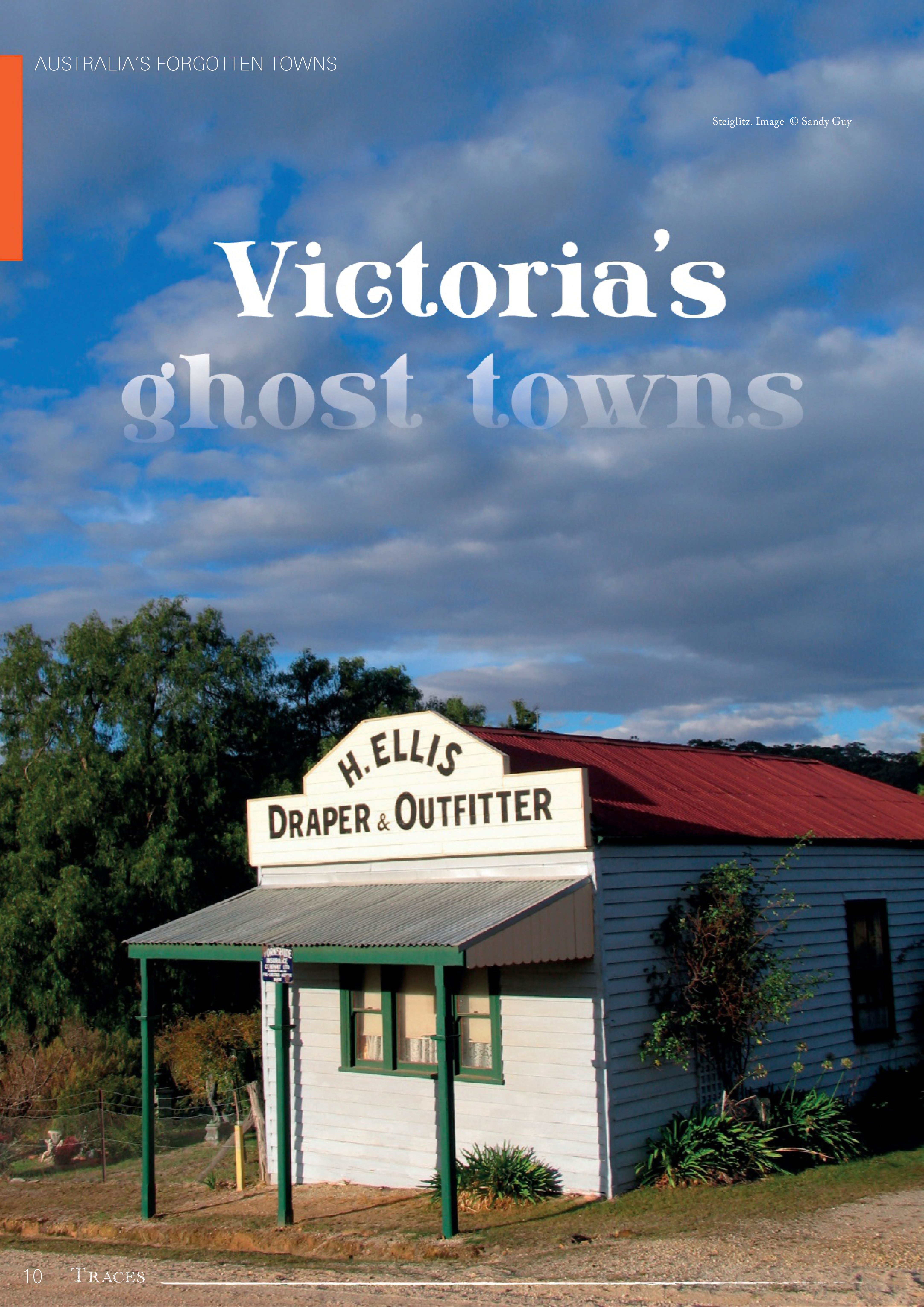
So, what was life like on prison hulks? Generally, the conditions aboard the dark, damp ships were atrocious. The prisoners stayed in cramped, filthy cells, and there was a constant risk of contracting horrible diseases; many prisoners died as a result. In the early days of Australian prison hulks, prisoners were often extremely malnourished, but reforms in later years meant that inmates could at least have three meals every day.

How your life panned out for you on a prison hulk often depended on the severity of your crime and which ship you were sent to. Prisoners on most prison hulks worked long hours doing arduous manual labour and would be chained up on the ship for the night. While these conditions might sound appalling, it was nothing compared to the conditions that other prisoners were subjected to. Certain prison hulks kept prisoners chained up in the ship, unable to leave and with nothing to do.

In addition, many of the prison guards and officers who worked on the hulks were extremely cruel. Committing a crime while you were on board could mean that you'd be sent to the 'black hole' – a dark, cramped cell that was below sea level.

Prison hulks were used in Australia for more than 80 years, which is surprising considering that they were meant to be a temporary solution. After the death of the Inspector General of Penal Establishments on a Victorian prison hulk, and the ensuing inquiries, prison hulks were decommissioned and the prisoners were moved to newly built prisons on dry land. Still, prison hulks remain an important part of Australia's convict history. ○

Victoria's ghost towns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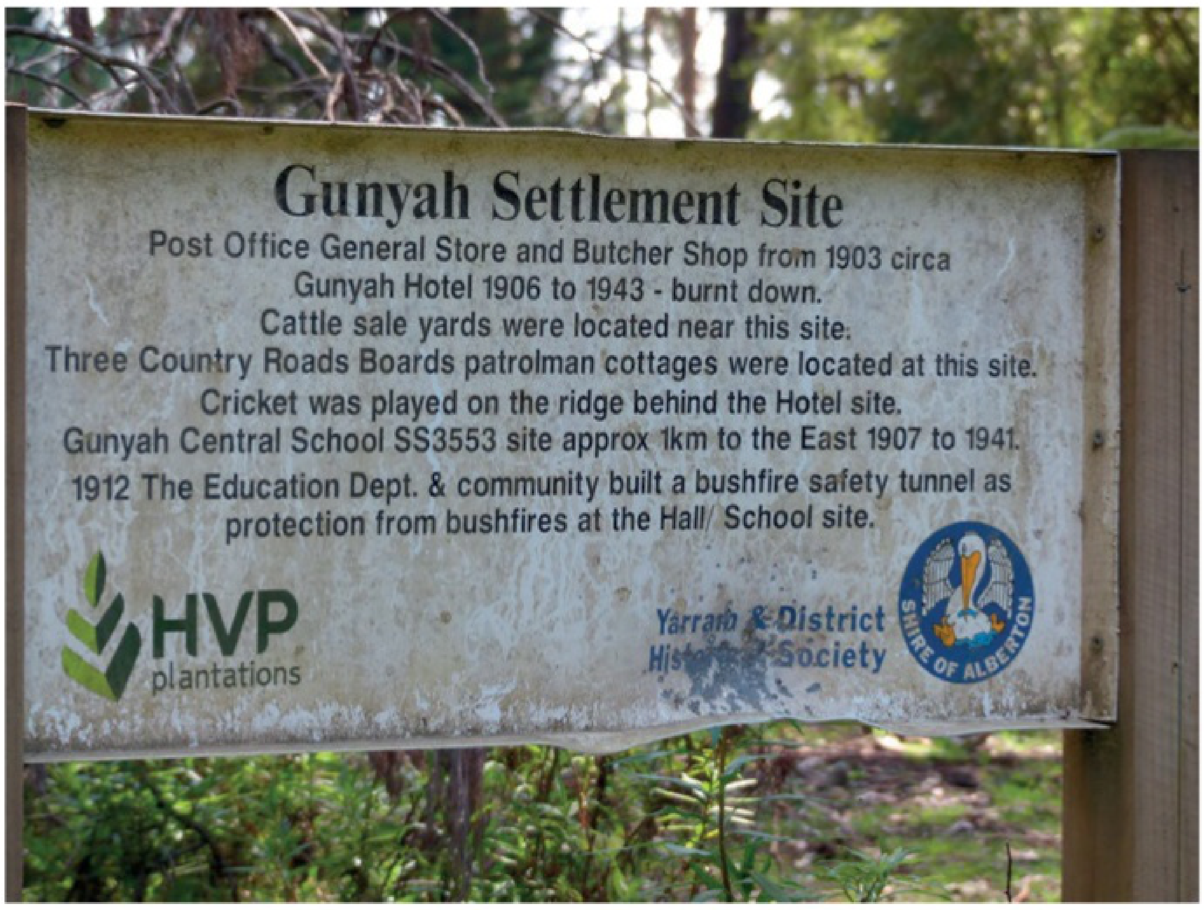
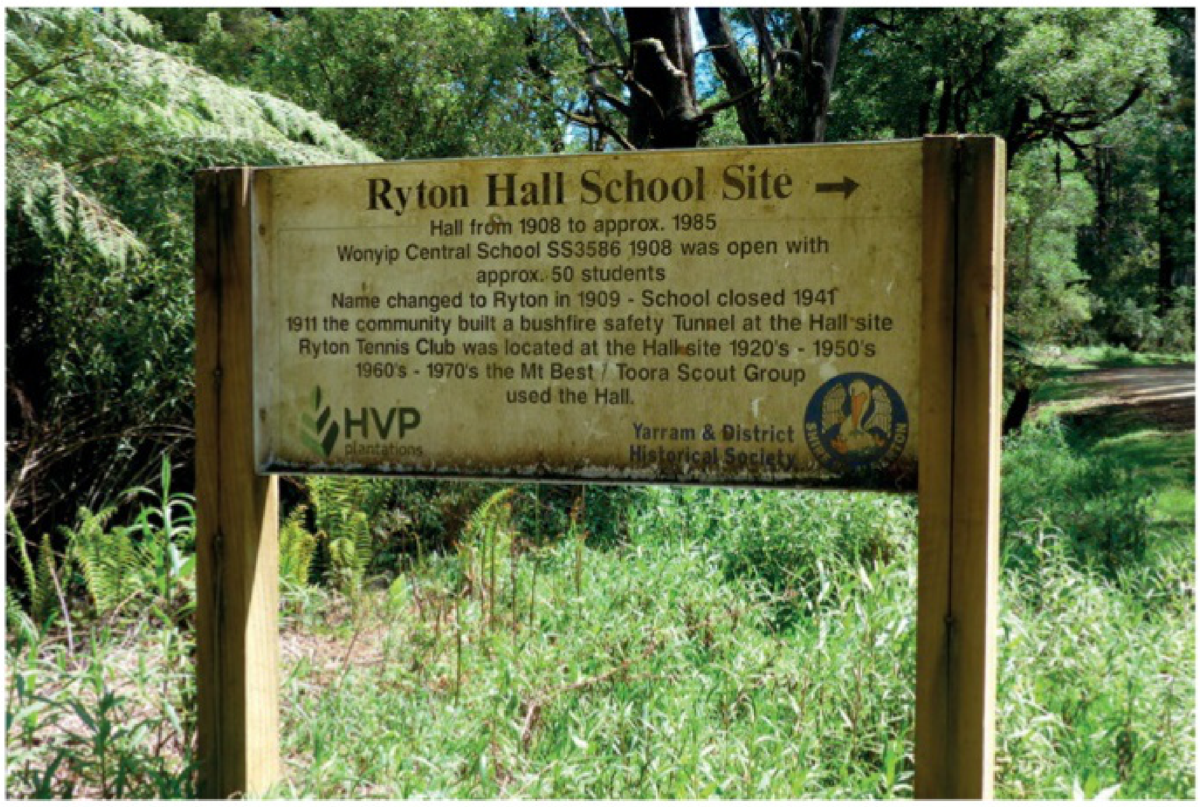
Steiglitz. Image © Sandy Guy


Gunyah Settlement Site
Post Office General Store and Butcher Shop from 1903 circa
Gunyah Hotel 1906 to 1943 - burnt down.
Cattle sale yards were located near this site.
Three Country Roads Boards patrolman cottages were located at this site.
Cricket was played on the ridge behind the Hotel site.
Gunyah Central School SS3553 site approx 1km to the East 1907 to 1941.
1912 The Education Dept. & community built a bushfire safety tunnel as
protection from bushfires at the Hall/ School site.
HVP plantations
Yarram & District Historical Society
SHIRE OF ALBERTON


Ryton Hall School Site →
Hall from 1908 to approx. 1985
Wonyip Central School SS3586 1908 was open with
approx. 50 students
Name changed to Ryton in 1909 - School closed 1941
1911 the community built a bushfire safety Tunnel at the Hall site
Ryton Tennis Club was located at the Hall site 1920's - 1950's
1960's - 1970's the Mt Best / Toora Scout Group
used the Hall.
HVP plantations
Yarram & District Historical Society

Top: Balook – Gunyah ghost town sign.
Image © Sandy Guy

Bottom: Ballook – Ruyton ghost town site.
Image © Sandy Guy

*Crooked River, Edwards Reef, Boggy Creek, Dog Town, Granite Flat, Hogtown, Bingo, Scotch Hollow, Sheepyard Flat, Bulltown, Tongio West, Grant – there are many sites across Victoria that were once booming communities and are now long-forgotten ghost towns. **Sandy Guy** explores these eerie settlements.*

Balook and surrounds – and the ghost of a forest

Prior to European settlement in the 1870s, much of south-eastern Victoria, including the Strzelecki Ranges, which extend to around 100 kilometres between west and east Gippsland, was cloaked with enormous trees and dense, jungle-like undergrowth. This became known as The Great Forest of South Gippsland.

The wholesale clearing of The Great Forest began when European settlers felled the ancient forests to make way for crops and cattle, and the region, for the most part, became prosperous farming country.

It was a different story in the eastern Strzelecki Ranges, a place of steeper slopes, rugged terrain, trees towering more than 80 metres and dense fern gullies, where settlers faced such hardships that the region became known as the 'Heartbreak Hills'.

Farmers contended with bleak, often snowy, winters; noxious weeds, such as the blackberries planted by the first European settler, Hans Kjergaard, who arrived in 1880; and isolation.

Although Balook is only 37 kilometres south of Traralgon and 30 kilometres north-west of Yarram, the steep hillsides, narrow tracks and dirt roads that turned to mud in winter meant that transporting goods was challenging.

Despite the hardships, a community grew around Balook, 190 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, and included a hall and a school.

Some farms in the area were decimated during bushfires in 1898, when 50 homesteads were destroyed, as well as in 1906 and 1939.

From 1914 to 1918, many young men left the hills to fight in World War I, and their family farms became neglected; numerous were even abandoned. By 1930, more than 60,000 hectares of land cleared by settlers had reverted to fern, blackberries and dogwood, and were plagued with rabbits.

The clearing of the eastern Strzeleckis – backbreaking work that obliterated ancient, unique forest – had been a disastrous mistake.

Victoria's Forest Commission began to purchase land in the area from the 1930s, bought Australian Paper Manufacturers from the 1950s, and large areas that were once old-growth forest were reforested with trees, such as pines. Balook came to life again as a sawmilling town, and a guesthouse was built in 1934.

Some pockets of the original forest remained, and an area was first set aside as Bulga National Park in 1904. In 1909, Tarra Valley National Park was designated. The parks merged into Tarra-Bulga National Park in 1986.

rra-Bulga
est House

Left: Balook – Tarra Bulga Guesthouse.
Image courtesy of Tarra Bulga Guesthouse

Parks
STEIGLITZ
HISTORIC PARK

Below: Ghost towns – Steiglitz historic park sign.
Image © Sandy Guy

Tiny Balook, where very little remains of the township bar the guesthouse – which still operates today – is the gateway to Tarra Bulga – a dense canopy of trees including myrtle beech trees, some thought to be more than 1000 years old, and mountain ash towering to 75 metres, underscored by blackwood, silver wattle and masses of tree ferns.

From Balook, the Grand Ridge Road follows the original route of Pawel Strzelecki – a Polish explorer who, with the assistance of Aboriginal guide Charley Tarra, led an expedition through this region in 1840 – twisting and turning through the ranges around 80 kilometres west to the small town of Mirboo North.

Driving this narrow gravel road, you get a sense of the isolation faced by early settlers. Along the way are several ghost towns, including Ruyton and Gunyah.

Gunyah was once a thriving community that included a 14-room hotel, school, post office, general store and cattle saleyards. There is nothing at all there today bar forest and a few old apple trees flowering amid the bush.

The road is used by logging trucks throughout the year, and it's not pleasant meeting one of them on such a narrow, winding road, so it's an idea to plan this drive on a Sunday. The terrain the road traverses gives an idea of the harshness of the lives of early settlers.

Alternatively, from Melbourne, take the Princes Highway 163 kilometres south-east to Traralgon, and then follow the Traralgon Creek Road 37 kilometres south to Balook. Or, travel the South Gippsland Highway 231 kilometres to Yarram via Leongatha and Foster, and via the Tarra Valley Road 30 kilometres north to Balook.

Steiglitz

Steiglitz, 37 kilometres west of Geelong, was a hive of activity during its glory days in the 1850s when the population peaked at more than 2000. The town's prosperity led to town surveys, land sales, and the construction of houses, schools, hotels, a police quarters, a courthouse, four churches, two banks, and seven crushing machines. But the gold was elusive, and by the 1870s only a handful of residents remained.

New mining technology brought about a revival in the 1890s, and Steiglitz boomed again, boasting a library, a newspaper, several pie shops, four schools, a coffee palace and billiards halls. Cricket, tennis and football clubs flourished; a racetrack was built; and a philharmonic society and brass band were formed.

The boom was short-lived. By 1900, the population had dwindled to 300; by the 1950s, less than 100 people lived here. Today, Steiglitz is a ghost town, part of the Steiglitz Historic Park. Proclaimed in 1979, the park was conceived as an example of what happens when the gold runs out and there is nothing else to keep the population.

These days, you can wander around what's left of the old town: the courthouse, built in 1875, is now a museum; a draper's store and post office still stand; and there are a few historical houses remaining along deserted streets fringed with wide sandstone gutters.

Gold panning is still popular here; you can explore the old cemetery on Maude-Steiglitz Road, and see evidence of mining throughout the bush on walks such as the 4.7-kilometre Deadman's Loop and the 5.5-kilometre Graham's Creek Walk.

Balook – Tarra Bulga walk. Image © Tourism Victoria

Whroo

The lonely Whroo Cemetery, seven kilometres south of Rushworth, is the final resting place of around 400 of the more than 2000 people who lived here in the 1850s.

Once a prosperous goldmining town of some 140 buildings – including hotels, banks, stores and one of the first Mechanic's Institute's on the goldfields – today, the Balaclava open cut mine, an example of early quartz reef mining, the relics of cyanide vats and a puddling machine, and the secluded cemetery, are all that mark this ghost town.

Part of the 33,000-hectare Rushworth State Forest, Whroo Historic Reserve, 190 kilometres north of Melbourne, is a popular spot for bushwalking and forest drives.

Mafeking

Mount William, in the Grampians region, around 240 kilometres north-west of Melbourne, became the site of Victoria's last gold rush in June 1900. Within a few weeks, thousands of hopeful prospectors had arrived, and in no time, Mafeking was born.

Ten thousand people were living in the town by late 1901. But as the gold ran out, people left in droves; by 1912, most mining had ceased.

Bushfires in the 1960s burnt the last of the miners' huts, and all that remains today are hidden pits, shafts and eroded creek beds. Browning's Loop Walk takes in some historic features; a brochure is available at the Grampians National Park Visitors' Centre at Halls Gap.

Toombon

The discovery of gold at Walhalla, Red Jacket, Donnelly's Creek, Aberfeldy and Toombon in the early 1860s sparked a rush of prospectors to the area, around 180 kilometres north-east of Melbourne.

Today, Walhalla's splendid old buildings, frozen in a time warp for decades, have largely been restored, and the old gold town has grown to become a popular tourist attraction. Home to around 4000 residents in the 1860s, today Walhalla has a population of about 20.

This picturesque corner of Gippsland has scenic drives to several surrounding ghost towns (most are only accessible by four-wheel drive), including the Toombon Gold Mines Historic Area.

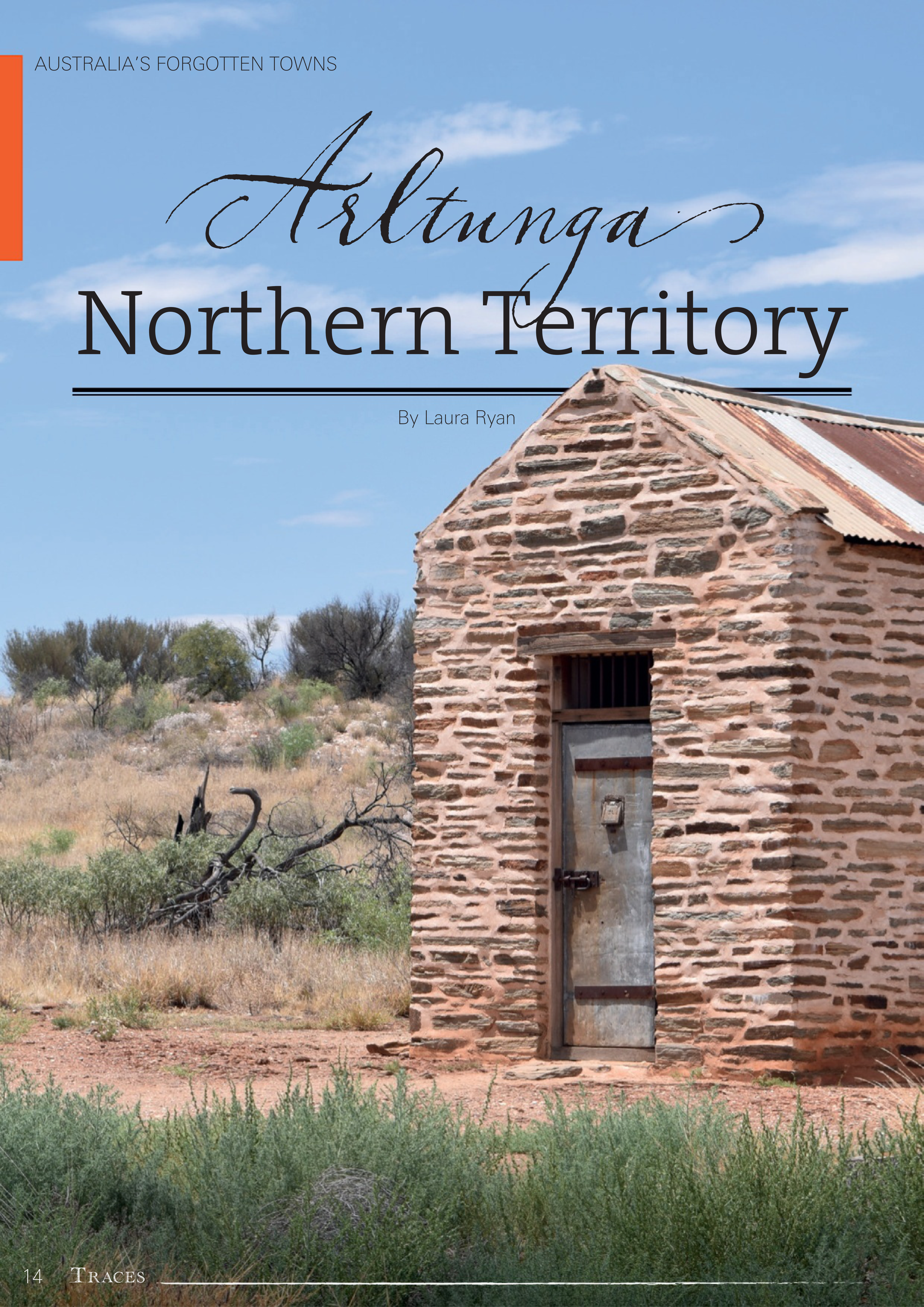
Haunted Stream

Alluvial gold was discovered at Haunted Stream – whose name is said to have originated from either the ghost of a murdered man called 'Ballarat Harry', or the noise of mopokes at night – in 1863.

The Haunted Stream is a small river that winds its way down the Tambo Valley into the Tambo River. The countryside is steep and rugged, and there are no major roads for access.

A township, later called Stirling, was established here from around 1882; by 1886, houses and businesses were springing up everywhere. A state school opened in 1887, and the town, 34 kilometres south of Omeo – which also boasted a Mechanic's Institute, a hotel, a church, and a collection of weatherboard and corrugated iron houses – was home to more than 800 people.

But by 1920, the township was reaching its end. Access to what's left of the town today – a few camp sites and some mine shafts – is via four-wheel drive along the Haunted Stream Track, off the Great Alpine Road near Tambo Crossing. Getting there is a challenge, with 54 river crossings along the way. ○



Arltunga
Northern Territory

By Laura Ryan

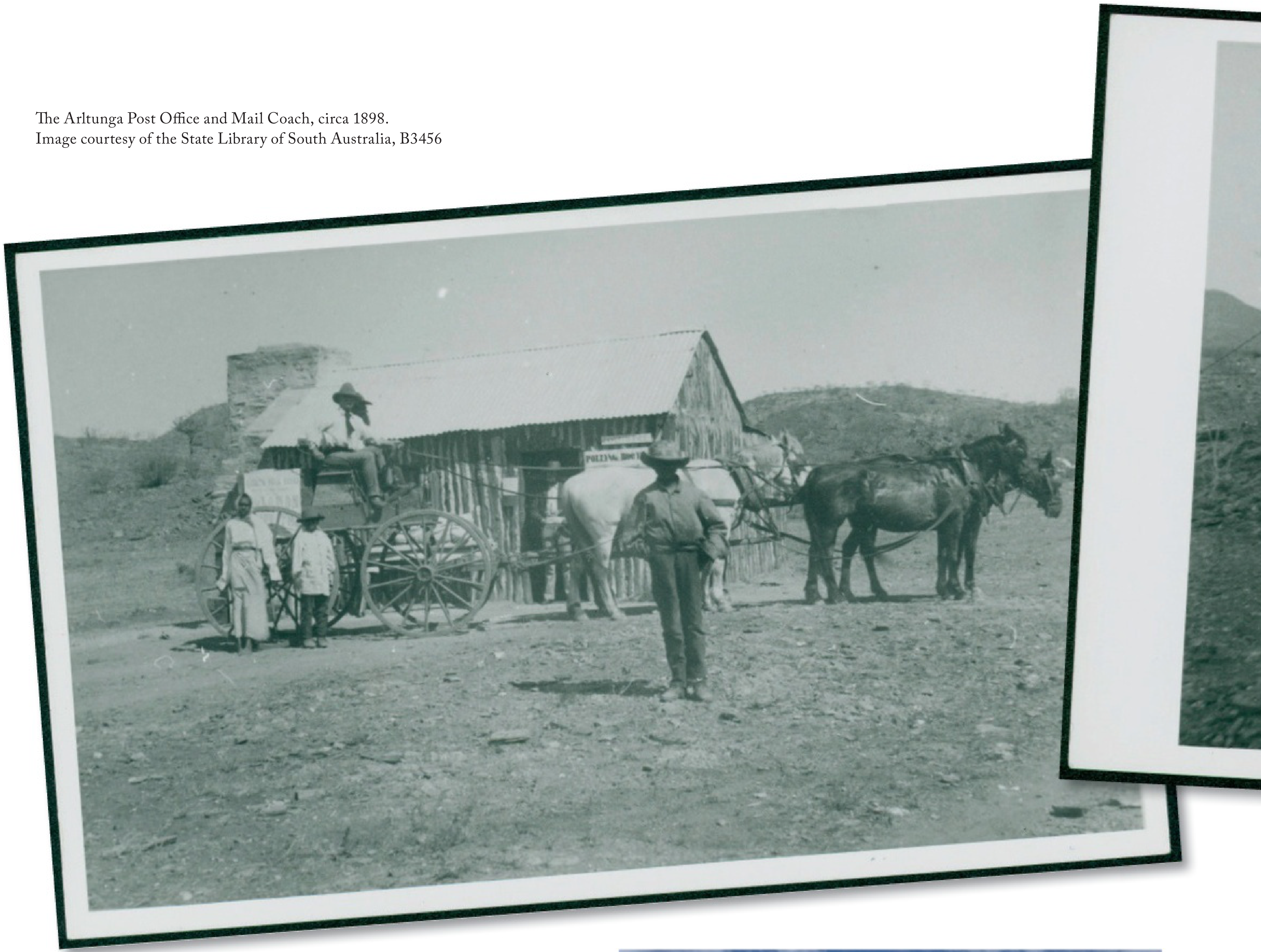
Resting on the cracked dirt of Australia's coarse centre is what remains of the town of Arltunga. While it was once a haven of hope for many fortune seekers in the gold rush, harsh conditions in the region saw Arltunga become a ghost town. Preserved by the area's dry heat, the town still gives a resounding impression of life as it was in the late 19th century.

Located around 16,000 kilometres from both Darwin and Adelaide, and 110 kilometres east of Alice Springs, Arltunga was the first European settlement in Central Australia. The town was named after the Arrernte Indigenous Australians, who had been living in the area for at least 20,000 years before South Australian explorer David Lindsay reported that he had found rubies there in 1887. Later that year, explorers discovered gold in a dry creek bed, and the town that would be Arltunga sprung to life.

At its peak, Arltunga was home to around 300 residents. Indigenous Australians, miners, foremen, engine drivers, cooks, blacksmiths, carpenters, housekeepers and many others made the town a hub of activity. In the 1880s, the gold rush settlement was only accessible by foot, but there were many people who were desperate enough for a golden fortune to make the gruelling 600-kilometre trek from the Oodnadatta railway.

Even after such a demanding journey, life in Arltunga was not easy. The town was extremely isolated, situated in some of the most unforgiving desert country in Australia, had scarce water sources, and suffered consistently high temperatures. With no water to grow crops and high food transportation expenses,

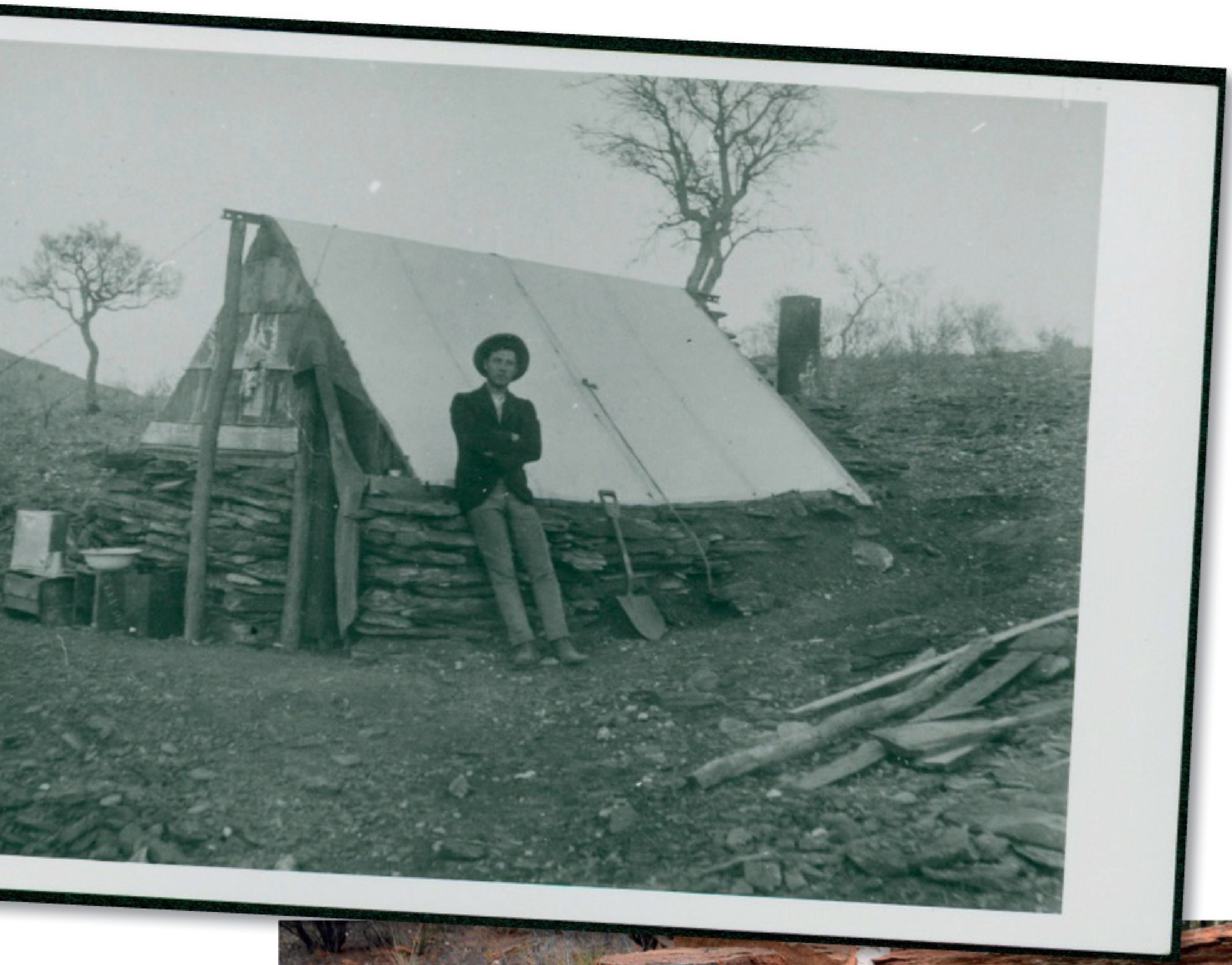
The Arltunga Post Office and Mail Coach, circa 1898.
Image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, B3456



the financial, physical and emotional costs of living soon began to outweigh the rewards reaped in gold. A Government Battery and Cyanide Works was built in 1898 in the hope of reviving the town, but the resident count still dropped to just 56 by 1911. The battery works ceased to operate around 1916, and by 1933, the population had dwindled to 25.

Arltunga today is a 5000-hectare historical reserve. Established in 1975, it features a visitor centre with an informative slide show that leads its guests through the stories of the town's colourful history, attractions and characters. Self-guided walking tours can be taken to see the town's largest attractions. Visitors can see the Golden Chance Mine and a miner's dwelling on one walk, and the Government Battery and Cyanide Works, houses, post office and government offices on another. The walk to the Great Western Mine offers guests a glimpse of the remaining historic White Range mines, and the MacDonnell Range Reef Mine, with its vertical shafts, for more adventurous explorers.

Open throughout the year, the Arltunga Historical Reserve makes for a most pleasant visit during the cooler months. Guests should remember to stay on designated roads and tracks, and bring a torch to explore the mines. ○



A tent dwelling in Arltunga, circa 1898. Image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, B3456.

Titanic's forgotten Australian hero

By Michael Adams

At 11.40 pm on 14 April 1912, the RMS *Titanic* hit an iceberg on its maiden voyage across the Atlantic and sank less than three hours later, resulting in the loss of more than 1500 lives, but while there have been hundreds of books and dozens of movies about that night, what has been overlooked is the heroic role played by an Australian.

Albert Nichols was born in July 1864 on Lord Howe Island. He was the eldest son of Thomas Nichols, a whaling captain from Hobart, and Mary Nichols, the only daughter of two of the island's pioneers, Thomas and Margaret Andrews.

After a violent falling-out with his parents, 17-year-old Albert fled from Lord Howe to Sydney, where he got a job on the ferries. Sometime in the late 1880s or early 1890s, he worked his way to England as a seaman and was employed by the White Star Line. In 1893, he married a Scottish woman named Jane Porter, and by 1907 they had three children and lived in Southampton. By then, Albert was the White Star Line's best boatswain and filled this important position on its biggest ocean liners. First there was RMS *Adriatic*, then RMS *Olympic* and, finally, the *Titanic*.

As *Titanic*'s boatswain, Albert was in charge of all deck operations and commanded 30 or so able-bodied seamen. He was on duty when the ship hit the iceberg. About half of his men were asleep – they were due on the midnight watch – though some stirred as they heard his voice outside their quarters. 'Close watertight bulkheads!' he yelled. On the deck, at a 11.45 pm, he told his men, 'All hands stand by. You may be wanted at any moment'.

Around midnight, *Titanic*'s designer, Thomas Andrews (no relation to Albert's grandfather), inspected the ship's watertight compartments. With five filling fast, the ship was going to sink within a few hours. Albert was among the first to know. He came into his men's quarters blowing his boatswain's whistle. 'Turn out, you fellows, you haven't half an hour to live,' he told them. 'That is from Mr Andrews. Keep it to yourselves and let no-one know.' Why Albert exaggerated the time the ship had left isn't known: likely he wanted to ensure they acted with utmost urgency. As for the insistence the men keep it to themselves: this was to prevent passenger panic. 'All hands on deck,' Albert said. 'Turn out the boats and take the covers off, and place the covers amidships.'

Readying each lifeboat took a handful of his men about 20 minutes. Once ready, the boat had to be swung out to be loaded with passengers and crew members, then teams of eight to 10 of Albert's men would carefully lower the lifeboat.

The evacuation was overseen by Chief Officer Henry Wilde, First Officer William Murdoch, Second Officer Charles Lightoller and Third Officer Herbert Pitman. They divided the able seamen into two groups, with Wilde and Murdoch supervising lifeboats on the starboard side, where Albert had charge of several boats, while Lightoller and Pitman worked the port side.

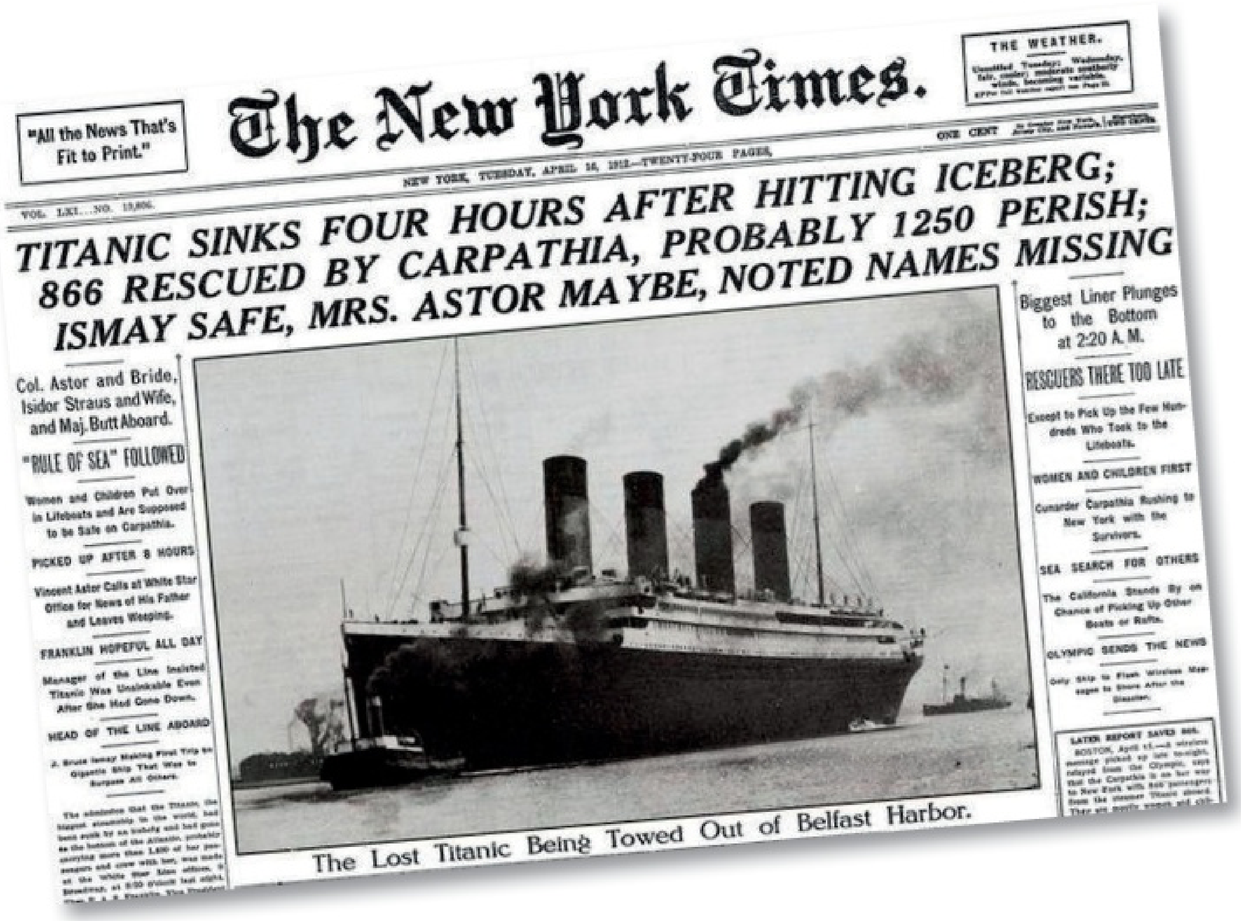
But *Titanic* only had lifeboat capacity for 1178 people, about half the number of souls on board.

The first lifeboat – number seven – descended at 12.45 am, on the starboard side, carrying just 28 people, with 40 or more spaces unfilled. One of those unfilled spaces was Albert's – he had been assigned to crew this boat. But he was elsewhere on starboard, getting boats three and five ready. There, Albert and his men got three more lifeboats away. At about 1 am, he crossed to port, where he reported to Lightoller, who ordered Albert to gather about six men and go below to open gangway doors – the doors used by passengers to enter the ship – on E deck. The reasoning was that half-filled lifeboats could return to collect passengers escaping from this doorway.

Albert mustered some of his men and went below to do his duty on the sinking ship. There, this group may have reached the E deck gangway door, opened it to see the waterline was too close and shut it again before going up to D deck, where they may have succeeded in opening a gangway door. Whether they closed it again, left it open, or closed it but left it unlocked isn't known – though a D deck was open when *Titanic* was discovered in 1985.

Down below, Albert and his team were either surprised by a sudden inundation or were trapped by rising waters. However it happened, they all drowned. Albert's body was never recovered, and the identities of the men who perished with him were never established.

Most of this time line came from Second Officer



"All the News That's Fit to Print."

The New York Times.

THE WEATHER.

ONE CENT

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1912—TWENTY-FOUR PAGES.

TITANIC SINKS FOUR HOURS AFTER HITTING ICEBERG;
866 RESCUED BY CARPATHIA, PROBABLY 1250 PERISH;
ISMAY SAFE, MRS. ASTOR MAYBE, NOTED NAMES MISSING

Col. Astor and Bride, Isidor Straus and Wife, and Maj. Butt Aboard.

"RULE OF SEA" FOLLOWED

Women and Children Put Over in Lifeboats and Are Supposed to be Safe on Carpathia.

PICKED UP AFTER 8 HOURS

Vincent Astor Calls at White Star Office for News of His Father and Leaves Weeping.

FRANKLIN HOPEFUL ALL DAY

Manager of the Line Insisted Titanic Was Unsinkable Even After She Had Gone Down.

HEAD OF THE LINE ABOARD

J. Bruce Ismay Making First Trip on Gigantic Ship That Was to Surpass All Others.

Biggest Liner Plunges to the Bottom at 2:20 A. M.

RESCUERS THERE TOO LATE

Except to Pick Up the Few Hundreds Who Took to the Lifeboats.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST

Cunarder Carpathia Rushing to New York with the Survivors.

SEA SEARCH FOR OTHERS

The California Stands By on Chance of Picking Up Other Boats or Rafts.

OLYMPIC SENDS THE NEWS

Only Ship to Flash Wireless Messages to Shore After the Disaster.

LATER REPORT SAVES 866.

The Lost Titanic Being Towed Out of Belfast Harbor.

Charles Lightoller at the British and American inquiries, which were both held soon after the sinking. Lightoller was *Titanic*'s senior surviving officer and thus became White Star's expert witness for the company's version of events.

With more than 1500 dead and so many half-filled lifeboats, Lightoller came under intense scrutiny over accusations that many had perished needlessly because there hadn't been enough seamen to get even the limited number of these vessels away. Lightoller claimed this was because early in the sinking he'd sent a large party of men below under the command of boatswain Nichols and they'd been lost.

During the American inquiry, Lightoller was vague about what time he'd given Albert this crucial order and how many men had actually gone below. US Senator William Smith, who chaired the inquiry, was incredulous that experienced seamen – vitally needed to prepare and lower lifeboats – should have been sent away to open a door, a task anyone could have performed. Other survivor testimony also cast doubt on Lightoller's version of events. One crewman, who'd worked with Albert on other ships, said the boatswain had ordered him into lifeboat number 13 at 1.40 am – 40 minutes after he'd supposedly gone below and died. Another crew member said that at 1.45 am, Albert had sent him off in lifeboat number two and given him a crash course in simple celestial navigation.

Lightoller was perhaps using Albert as a scapegoat. Two decades later, writing his autobiography, *Titanic And Other Ships*, he admitted that he'd lied. 'It was very necessary to keep one's hand on the whitewash brush,' he said of the British inquiry. 'Sharp questions that needed careful answers if one was to avoid a pitfall… leading to a pinning down of blame onto someone's luckless shoulders.'

As with many things *Titanic,* there are few definite answers. But it is possible to say that Albert Nichols died doing his duty. We also know that he knew he was going down with the ship. That's because he handed his prized boatswain's whistle to a crew member in a lifeboat and asked that it be given to his family in Southampton. It was – and still is – in the Nichols family.

I know this because his family is my family. My name is Michael Adams, but it hasn't always been. I was adopted when I was two weeks old. My birth name? Damian Nichols. In mid 2018, using the research tools I developed for my book, *Australia's Sweetheart* and for my podcast *Forgotten Australia*, I found my biological family and discovered that I'm a sixth-generation Lord Howe Islander. Thomas and Margaret Andrews? They were my great-great-grandparents. Their daughter Mary and her husband, Captain Thomas Nichols, were my great-grandparents and *Titanic*'s boatswain Albert William Stanley Nichols was my great-great-uncle. ○

You can hear the full story of Albert Nichols's life at www.forgottenaustralia.com.

FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIA

History — As You've Never Heard It Before

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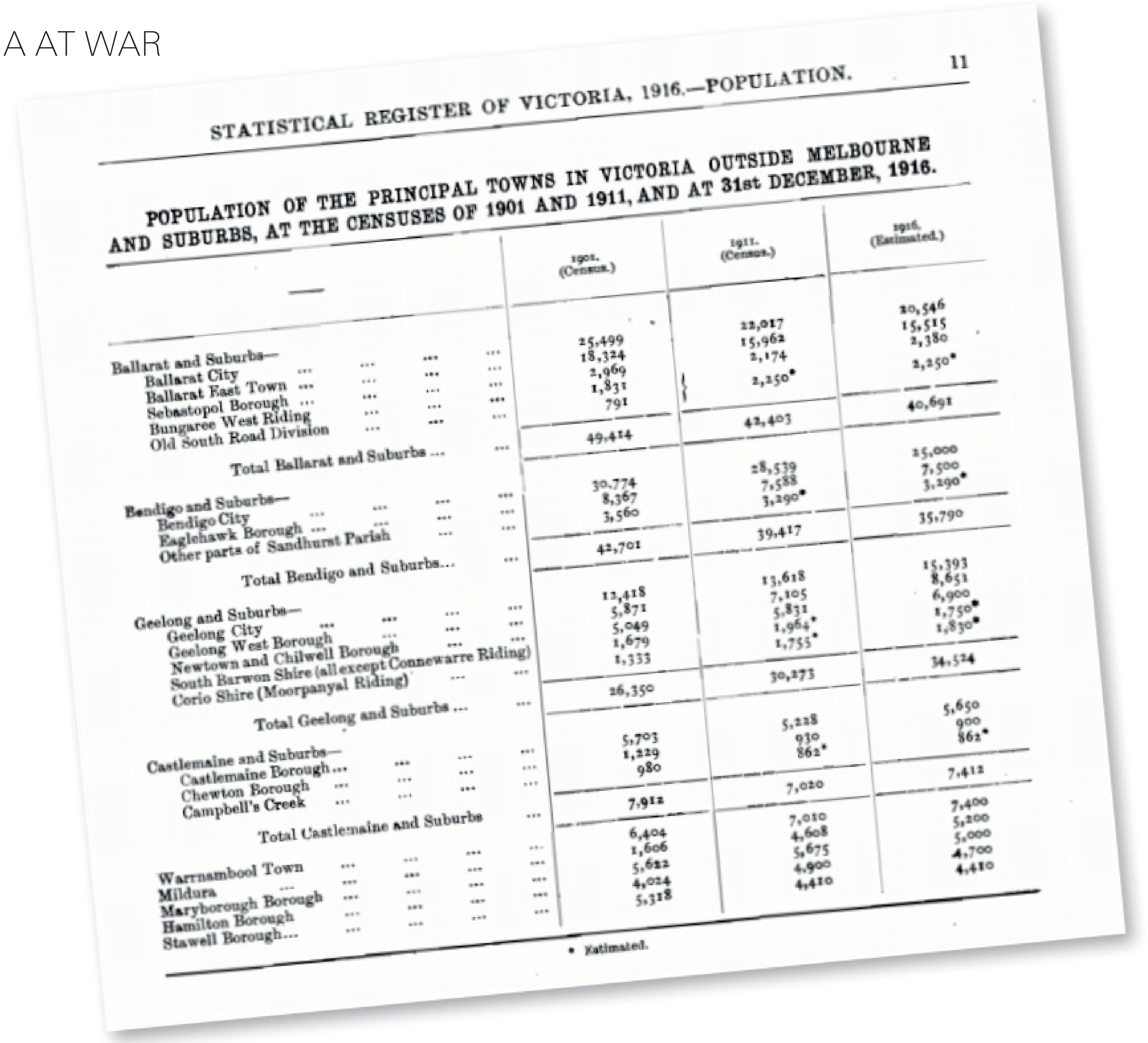

STATISTICAL REGISTER OF VICTORIA, 1916.—POPULATION. 11

POPULATION OF THE PRINCIPAL TOWNS IN VICTORIA OUTSIDE MELBOURNE AND SUBURBS, AT THE CENSUSES OF 1901 AND 1911, AND AT 31st DECEMBER, 1916.

—	1901. (Census.)	1911. (Census.)	1916. (Estimated.)
Ballarat and Suburbs—			
Ballarat City	25,499	22,017	20,546
Ballarat East Town	18,324	15,962	15,515
Sebastopol Borough	2,969	2,174	2,380
Bungaree West Riding	1,831	2,250*	2,250*
Old South Road Division ...	791		
Total Ballarat and Suburbs	49,414	42,403	40,691
Bendigo and Suburbs—			
Bendigo City	30,774	28,539	25,000
Eaglehawk Borough	8,367	7,588	7,500
Other parts of Sandhurst Parish	3,560	3,290*	3,290*
Total Bendigo and Suburbs... ...	42,701	39,417	35,790
Geelong and Suburbs—			
Geelong City	12,418	13,618	15,393
Geelong West Borough	5,871	7,105	8,651
Newtown and Chilwell Borough	5,049	5,831	6,900
South Barwon Shire (all except Connewarre Riding)	1,679	1,964*	1,750*
Corio Shire (Moorpanyal Riding)	1,333	1,755*	1,830*
Total Geelong and Suburbs	26,350	30,273	34,524
Castlemaine and Suburbs—			
Castlemaine Borough...	5,703	5,228	5,650
Chewton Borough	1,229	930	900
Campbell's Creek	980	862*	862*
Total Castlemaine and Suburbs ...	7,912	7,020	7,412
Warrnambool Town	6,404	7,010	7,400
Mildura	1,606	4,608	5,200
Maryborough Borough	5,622	5,675	5,000
Hamilton Borough	4,024	4,900	4,700
Stawell Borough...	5,318	4,410	4,410

* Estimated.

Bendigo Census data 1916

EAGLEHAWK'S GREAT SACRIFICE

The story of Australia's bravest municipality in the Great War.

By Jack Coyne

Unlike other war memorials dotted across Australia, there are no names etched into the hard granite memorial that stands outside Eaglehawk Town Hall; however, testament to the commitment made in the Great War by the people of 'the Borough' is the one line firmly etched onto the bronze mountings: 'Over 900 served, over 100 dead'.

The Borough of Eaglehawk, five miles south-east of Bendigo in Central Victoria, had been a self-governing municipality since 1862 and, by the turn of the 20th century, had grown fiercely independent of its much larger and more prosperous municipal rival, the City of Bendigo. The challenges of surviving on the edge of the harsh, dry scrubland of northern Victoria, and the economic boom and bust of goldmining, had galvanised the community with a ferocity that played out in local politics, culture and sporting achievements over the next century. This tenacity of spirit would again become evident on the distant battlefields of Turkey and Europe in the Great War.

My research was not intended to be on Eaglehawk at all. Having grown up in Bendigo, I set out to identify and place on record the men and women awarded for their bravery in the Great War that were either born or had lived in the Bendigo district when they enlisted. As my research progressed, I soon realised that the Borough seemed to be over-represented in these bravery numbers.

THE GREAT WAR
1914 – 1918
IN HONOUR OF OUR BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED AND IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THOSE WHO DIED.
OVER 900 SERVED OVER 180 DIED
AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM
CINEMA

Brassey Square, the civic centre of Eaglehawk, Victoria. The complex includes the former post office on the left, the former town hall in the centre and the Mechanics Institute on the right. Behind the buildings, out of shot, is the former Court house. A war memorial is in the foreground.
Image © Mattinbgn, via Wikimedia Creative Commons

Inset: Great War bronze mounting on Eaglehawk War Memorial. Photo courtesy of J. Coyne

The scale of enlistment and contribution by the Eaglehawk community was possibly replicated in other rural communities across the country, and I'm sure all 900 men who enlisted from Eaglehawk were extremely brave. Per capita, few communities could match the number of bravery awards received by 'Borough men', and I'd welcome local historians nationwide to identify a town, suburb or district as having an official bravery count that could rival this municipality.

To date, I have been able to identify 38 Borough men who were officially acknowledged for 51 'conspicuous acts of bravery and gallantry' by a range of Allied Military authorities. At the time of the Great War, Eaglehawk's population is best gauged by the nearest census of 1911, when the municipality was accredited with 7588 residents. The nearby City of Bendigo and surrounding parishes had a combined population of 31,829.[1] If the populations are combined, Eaglehawk constitutes approximately 24 per cent of the district's total population; however, in terms of bravery recipients, 42 per cent (38) came from Eaglehawk. (To date, I have identified 90 bravery award recipients in Bendigo and the surrounding district, excluding Eaglehawk.)

Additionally noteworthy were the 'Borough boys' who were acknowledged for two conspicuous acts of bravery and gallantry. To be recognised by senior officers for one act of valour was rare; to be recognised twice was remarkable. To date, my research has identified that six Eaglehawk men can be accredited with two brave actions or deeds. Another six men received a bravery medal and were additionally honoured by being 'Mentioned in Despatches' or receiving an award from an Allied nation, namely Belgium, France or Serbia.

In addition, Eaglehawk can boast a recipient of the most prestigious bravery award in the Empire, the Victoria Cross (VC). Eaglehawk born and raised, William (Bill) Symons received the Victoria Cross for his heroic actions at Lone Pine on the Dardanelles Peninsula in August 1915. Although his family had moved to Melbourne when he was a young man, he still saw himself as a Borough boy. This was reflected in his comment to a fellow Bendigo officer as they grimly held onto a trench under siege by thousands of Turkish infantry, that he doubted they'd ever see Bendigo and Eaglehawk again.[2] Symons recovered from wounds at Gallipoli in England, was ordered home to assist the recruitment effort in 1916 and then returned to fight on the Western Front. He was also 'Mentioned in Despatches' for his participation in a raid by the 10th Brigade on 27 February 1917 at Armentières, France.

Throughout the war, the three local Bendigo newspapers, *The Bendigo Advertiser, Bendigo Independent* (both dailies), and *The Bendigonians,* were consumed with news from the Front. The melancholy task of reporting the toll on local men killed, wounded or sick was occasionally broken by brighter news that one of our own – a local man – had been decorated with a bravery award.

Despite the local paper's hubris, anecdotal evidence from some of the soldiers' letters to home was at pains to point out that they were fortunate to have their brave act noticed by someone higher in the chain of command, yet fellow Australian soldiers in the trenches were committing braver deeds all around them that sadly went unnoticed or were often ignored or downgraded by the British Military hierarchy.

The proud people of Eaglehawk annually honour their returned service people on Anzac Day. They can now add to that proud legacy these 38 unsung, unassuming men, all volunteers, who undertook incredibly brave acts of valour a century ago. ○

Turn the page to read about six of the Eaglehawk heroes.

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[1] Statistical Register of Victoria, 1916, Population. Population of the principal towns outside Melbourne

[2] *The Bendigo Independent* (Vic: 1891–1918), Wednesday 22 March 1916, page 5, 'RETURNED HEROES'

EAGLEHAWK MEN ACKNOWLEDGED FOR ACTS OF VALOUR IN THE GREAT WAR

Frederick Baxter

Schoolteacher Frederick Baxter enlisted at the age of 22 in February 1916. He was promoted to officer and awarded the Military Cross in early August 1918 for the capture of an enemy strongpoint in fighting on the Somme. Just 21 days later, he was recommended for the Bar to his Military Cross for another brave deed involving the silencing of an enemy machine-gun crew. Stories of his bravery on the battlefield were often cited at recruitment rallies in the district in 1917, a full year before he was officially recommended for these two awards. He fell seriously ill just five days after his final brave action and was invalided home. He never fully recovered and died at the young age of 28 in June 1921.

Studio portrait of Lieutenant Frederick Baxter.
Image courtesy of Discovering Anzacs, National Archives Australia

Tom Hicks

Local athlete, rower and 'letter carrier' from Jobs Gully, Tom Hicks was a signaller who was awarded the Military Medal for actions at Pozières in 1916. A few months later, his bravery would again be acknowledged in receiving the Bar to his Military Medal at the dreadful battle of Passchendaele in October 1917. As a signaller, his job was extremely dangerous, usually requiring the repair of communication lines under heavy fire in battle. Thomas and his brother's athletic prowess saw them win medals in sporting carnivals organised in England for soldiers in training awaiting deployment or repatriation after the war.

Lance Corporal Thomas Hicks.
Image courtesy of Trove. *The Bendigonian*, 17 May 1917, page 16

William Veale

Twenty-two-year-old civil engineer William (Bill) Veale from California Gully received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for rescuing wounded in 1917. He then received the Military Cross in 1918 for leading the construction of critical bridges over the Somme River under heavy fire, which enabled the successful crossing by Australian and American infantry the next day.

After the war, he became Town Clerk of Adelaide. He served again in World War II and was appointed Brigadier.

Sapper William Veale. Image courtesy of Trove: *The Bendigonian*, Thursday 4 April 1918, page 31, 'AWARDED THE D.C.M.'

Harry Downes

Eaglehawk-born Harry Downes enlisted in Kalgoorlie at the age of 21 in September 1915. Prior to the war, many Eaglehawk mining families had taken this path to Western Australia in pursuit of new gold discoveries. He was awarded the Military Medal in 1917 and received his commission to become an officer on the battlefield. He was again recognised for bravery with the Military Cross award for attacking the Hindenburg Line on 18 September 1918. On return from the war, he became a successful stockbroker in Adelaide, only to commit suicide in his office on Remembrance Day at the height of the depression in 1931.

The Australian War Memorial holds over 100 photographs taken by Lieutenant Harry Downes.

Lieutenant Harry Downes. Image courtesy of Australian War Memorial P10687.046.002

James McConnell

Eaglehawk publican James (Mackie) McConnell received the Military Medal in July 1918 for showing 'great dash and vigour in dealing with enemy posts'. Ten days later in August, he was recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal in heavy fighting on the Somme, where, although wounded, he took control of a platoon and drove the enemy back as the Australians pursued the Germans back to the Hindenburg Line.

Sergeant James McConnell receiving both his Distinguished Conduct Medal and Military Medal from the Governor-General. Image courtesy of Trove: *The Australasian* Saturday 25 October 1919, page 66, 'Presentation of war decorations and medals by the Governor-General at the domain camp, Melbourne, on 17 October'

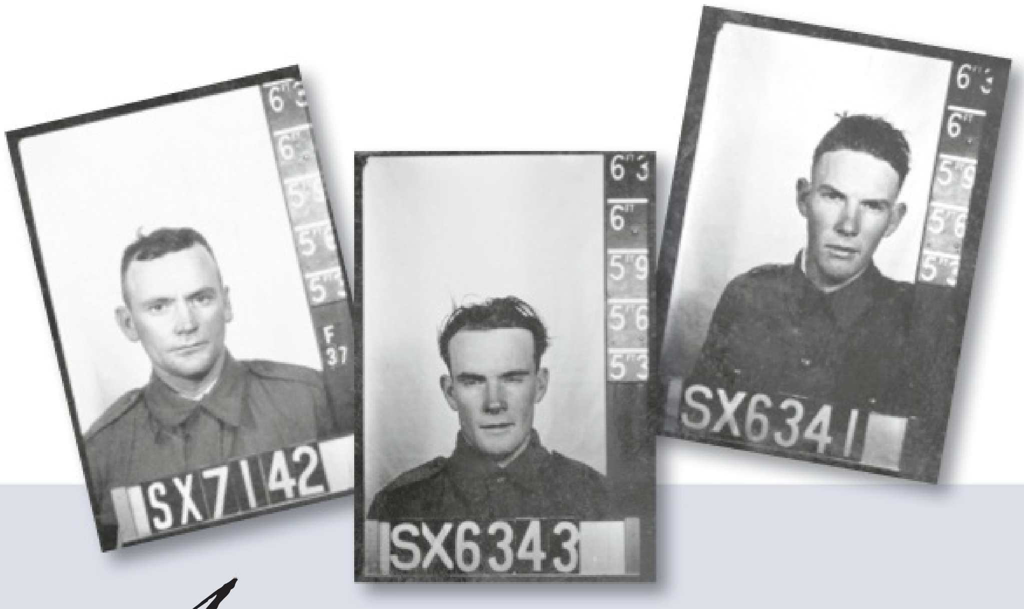
Horace Clough

Swan Hill–born Eaglehawk butcher and footballer Horace Clough's brave actions were used in the new sportsmen unit introduced to bolster recruitment in 1917.[3] He was promoted to officer level following the award of the Military Medal for his skill in handling reconnoitring patrols in February 1917. He was then recommended for the Military Cross in the last Australian battle (Montbrehain) of the war in October 1918, when he took charge of his company and continued the advance after his commander was killed.

Studio portrait of Second Lieutenant Horace Clough.

Image courtesy of Australian War Memorial P07758.003

[3] *The Bendigo Advertiser*, 30 June 1917, page 4



From left: Ken, Jack and Harry Jarvis all enlisted in South Australia in 1940, subsequently dying overseas aged 30, 24 and 21 years, respectively. Images courtesy of NAA: B883, SX7142, SX6343 and SX6341

A little token, true and tender

The sad stories behind Mothers' and Widows' badges.

By Dr Peter Hobbins, National Archives of Australia

During and after World War II, grief for lost loved ones was often kept private. One small medallion, however, represented a public token of silent suffering. The Mothers' and Widows' Badge was awarded to women whose husbands or children had been 'killed in action, or died of wounds or from other causes whilst on service' in the Mercantile Marine, Royal Australian Navy, Royal Australian Air Force, Australian Army or Australian Army Nursing Service. A seven-pointed star hung below the badge for each relative who died.

Thankfully, few women wore three maudlin stars beneath their Mothers' and Widows' Badge. Among them was South Australian mother Ellen May 'Nellie' Young, born in 1884. Marrying James Jarvis, 17 years her senior, this Catholic couple had nine children between 1902 and 1921: Daisy May (Dais), Ivy Myrtle, Dorothy (Dot), Daniel George (Dan), James Norman (Jim), Kenneth Gordon (Ken), Gladys Olive (Terry), Jack Verdun and Harry Lawrence.

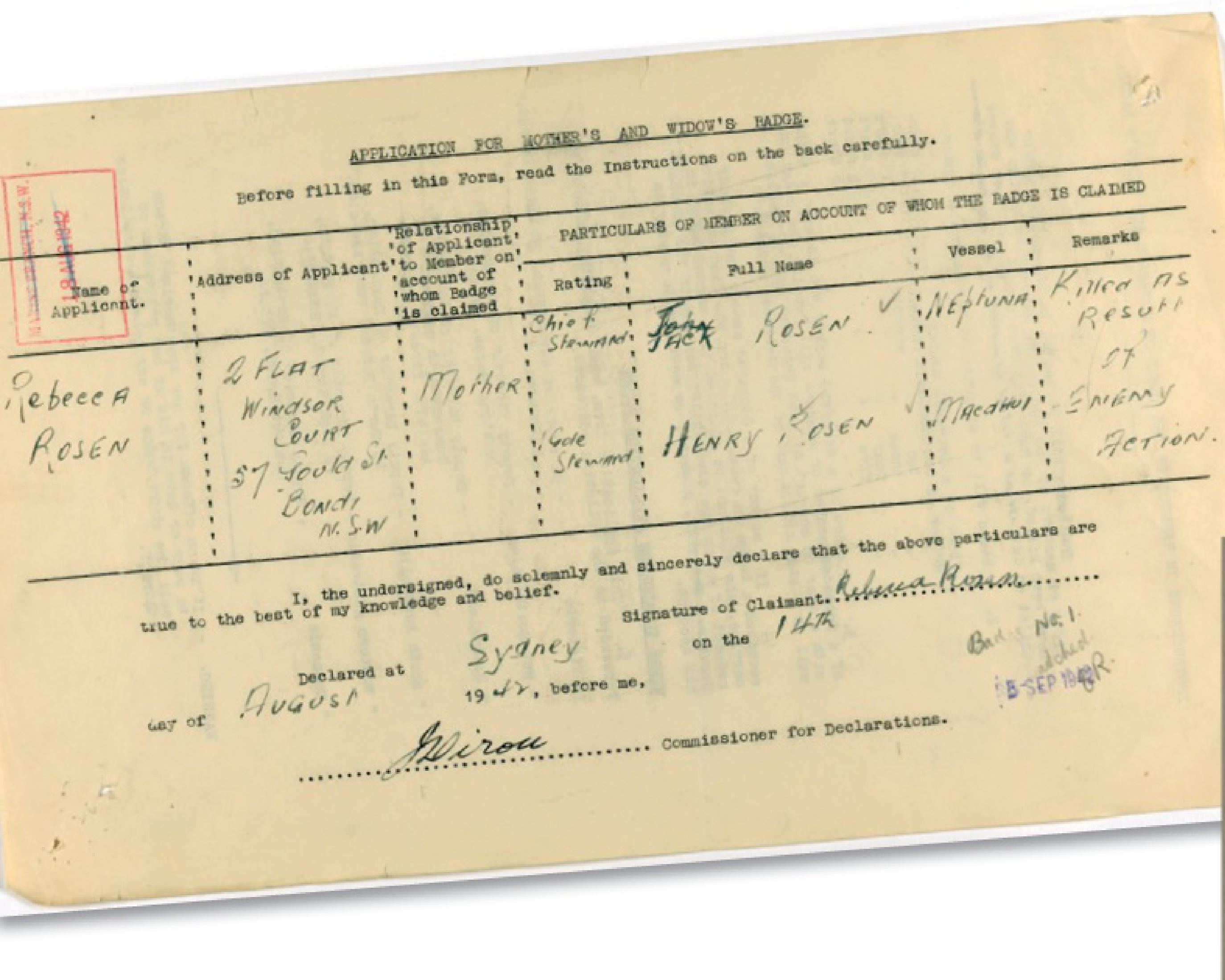
Brothers serving together

Soon after the war began in September 1939, Nellie's four youngest sons enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. Jim was 31, and 29-year-old Ken ended his motor mechanic's apprenticeship to join up. The brothers served together in the 2/48 Infantry Battalion, sailing to the Middle East in November 1940. Two years later, Jim was severely wounded at the battle of El Alamein in Egypt, and invalided home as unfit for military service.

Ken sadly died of wounds during the siege of Tobruk on 4 May 1941. His remains now lie in Libya's Tobruk War Cemetery. His sister Dais later published a poignant memorial notice: 'A little token, true and tender / Just to show I still remember'. Within a few weeks of Ken's death, Nellie received her own token: Mothers' and Widows' Badge A826, bearing a single star below.

Her youngsters, Jack and Harry, joined up together in June 1940. Jack had just turned 21 but Harry was only 18, so he lied about his age – a deception not discovered for several years. He claimed to be a foreman at a salt company, while Jack reported being a shop assistant. Although a well-known footballer in Adelaide, Jack's second name remains enigmatic. The French town of Verdun was the site of a famous World War I battle, but his father almost certainly did not serve during that conflict.

Like their older brothers, Jack and Harry were posted to the same unit, the 2/3 Machine Gun Battalion. First deployed to Syria, the battalion was recalled early in 1942 to defend Australia against the Japanese. In late February, they formed part of a small contingent put ashore on Java. When their force surrendered a few weeks later, the Jarvis boys passed into Japanese captivity. Transferred to Thailand, they joined 13,000 other Australians compelled to work on the notorious Burma Railway.



APPLICATION FOR MOTHER'S AND WIDOW'S BADGE.

Before filling in this Form, read the Instructions on the back carefully.

Name of Applicant.	Address of Applicant	Relationship of Applicant to Member on account of whom Badge is claimed	PARTICULARS OF MEMBER ON ACCOUNT OF WHOM THE BADGE IS CLAIMED			
			Rating	Full Name	Vessel	Remarks
Rebecca Rosen	2 Flat Windsor Court 57 Gould St. Bondi N.S.W	Mother	Chief Steward	~~John~~ JACK ROSEN ✓	NEPTUNA	Killed as result of enemy action.
			Gde Steward	HENRY ROSEN ✓	Macdhui	

I, the undersigned, do solemnly and sincerely declare that the above particulars are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

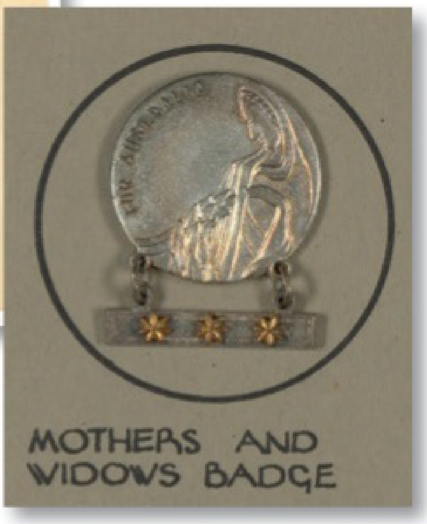
Signature of Claimant. Rebecca Rosen

Declared at Sydney on the 14th day of August 1942, before me,

J. Hirou Commissioner for Declarations.

Badge No. 1 added 8-SEP 1942 R.

Left: Applications from the mother of Henry Rosen, a Mercantile Marine steward killed when a Japanese air raid sank MV *Macdhui* in Darwin on 19 February 1942. Henry's mother also lost her husband, Jack, during the same attack. Image courtesy of NAA A11788, 60 and 71



Below: This sample Mothers' and Widows' Badge, held in the National Archives of Australia, bears three stars, just as Nellie Jarvis would have worn below her badge.
Image courtesy of NAA A5954, 318/2

Tense times

The following years were tense times for Nellie Jarvis. In mid 1942, Japanese radio announced that Jack and Harry were prisoners of war, but gave no further information. 'I am a very worried mother, not even knowing if my dear boys are alive', Nellie wrote in January 1945. She was also troubled by her aged husband's infirmity, her own poor health and their desperate financial situation.

Shortly before the war ended, two messages confirmed the couple's worst fears. Jack had died from malaria, cholera and a chest infection at Hintok camp on 29 June 1943. In his famous wartime diary, surgeon Edward 'Weary' Dunlop described desperately trying to save Jack, but to no avail. Harry, in the same hospital, joined the small funeral procession. Exactly two months later, on 29 August, he, too, died – from avitaminosis (malnutrition) – and was buried at Tarsao camp.

As many Australians celebrated the Japanese surrender in August 1945, Nellie received a sad package: Mothers' and Widows' Badge A826 with two extra stars. Yet, as the family mourned, their community rallied, forming a 'Jarvis Recognition Fund' to acknowledge their awful sacrifice. An impressive £427 was raised toward a better home for the bereaved parents. It supplemented £525 in war gratuities that Nellie and James were owed from their three deceased sons' army pay.

By the time the Jarvises moved into their new home in late 1946, Jack and Harry had been reinterred at Thailand's Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. 'Darlings', Nellie wrote in August 1947, 'I have just received the photo of your graves, and there is no dear[er] spot on Earth to me than the place where you are laid'. Perhaps there was one dearer spot: a small badge, bearing three sad stars, worn close to her heart. ○

Research resources

Military registers for Mothers' and Widows' Badges have all been digitised and can be viewed via the National Archives of Australia's RecordSearch catalogue (recordsearch.naa.gov.au). Click 'Advanced search' and type Series (e.g. MT1384/2) and Control (e.g. BOOK 69) values into the relevant fields. For Mercantile Marine applications, use Series A11788 and add the individual's name in 'Keywords in title'.

- Army – New Guinea: MT1384/2, BOOK 73
- Army – New South Wales: MT1384/2, BOOK 11
- Army – Northern Territory: MT1384/2, BOOK 72
- Army – Queensland: MT1384/2, BOOK 1
- Army – South Australia: MT1384/2, BOOK 55
- Army – Tasmania: MT1384/2, BOOK 69
- Army – Victoria (1): MT1384/2, BOOK 43
- Army – Victoria (2): MT1384/2, BOOK 44
- Army – Western Australia: MT1384/2, BOOK 62
- Air Force – All states: A13289, 13
- Navy – All states: A13289, 1
- Mercantile Marine – All states, A11788

Over 200,000 World War II service records are available digitally via the National Archives RecordSearch catalogue, including all Navy records. All remaining Army and Air Force service records (Series B883, B884, A9300 and A9301) will be added as they are digitised by June 2023.

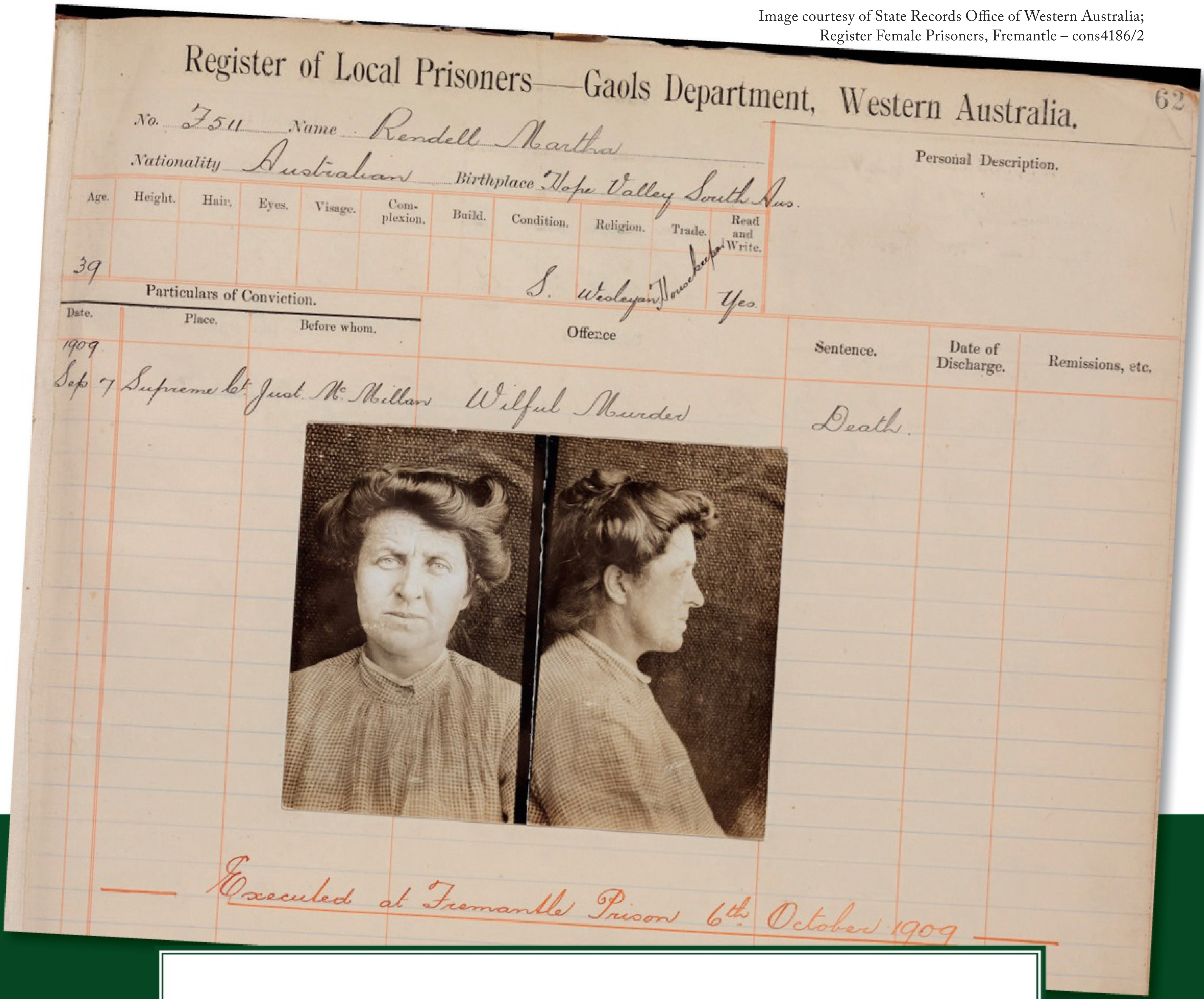


Image courtesy of State Records Office of Western Australia;
Register Female Prisoners, Fremantle – cons4186/2

Register of Local Prisoners—Gaols Department, Western Australia. 62

No. 751 Name Rendell Martha

Nationality Australian Birthplace Hope Valley South Aus.

Personal Description.

Age.	Height.	Hair.	Eyes.	Visage.	Complexion.	Build.	Condition.	Religion.	Trade.	Read and Write.
39							S.	Wesleyan	Housekeeper	Yes.

Particulars of Conviction.

Date.	Place.	Before whom.	Offence	Sentence.	Date of Discharge.	Remissions, etc.
1909 Sep 7	Supreme Ct	Just. McMillan	Wilful Murder	Death.		

Executed at Fremantle Prison 6th October 1909

Perth's wicked stepmother

The life and times of Martha Rendell, convicted child killer and the only woman to be hanged in Western Australia.

By Giulia Heppell

Born on 10 August 1871, Martha Rendell was reported to be the kind of stepmother that would put Cinderella's to shame. Convicted in 1908 for murdering her de facto husband's 15-year-old son, Arthur, and suspected of killing her two young stepdaughters, Rendell's trial was sensationalised in the media, with the press calling her a 'scarlet woman' and 'evil stepmother'. Yet, more than 100 years on, Rendell's execution remains controversial.

The beginning of the end

Our tale begins with an affair. Thomas Nicholls Morris and his wife, Sarah, had what she described as an unhappy and quarrelsome marriage, with Thomas having 'kept' a mistress: Martha Rendell. Looking for a fresh start, the family moved from Adelaide to Perth; however, little did they know that this was the beginning of the end, with Rendell following her love out west. After a particularly nasty and violent fight, Morris 'turned' Sarah out of home, forcing her to leave her five youngest children – Olive, Annie, George, Arthur and William, aged between six and 15 – behind. With his wife out of the picture, Morris soon installed his mistress and paramour in her place, demanding his children call Rendell 'Mother' under threat of thrashings.

Fremantle Prison Gallows. Image © Chris Quinn (quinncd), via Wikimedia Creative Commons

Twice is a coincidence, third time's a pattern

Over 15 months, three of Rendell's stepchildren died from diphtheria, or 'throat afflictions'. Yet, it was only when a fourth child started presenting the same symptoms that neighbours – and police – became suspicious.

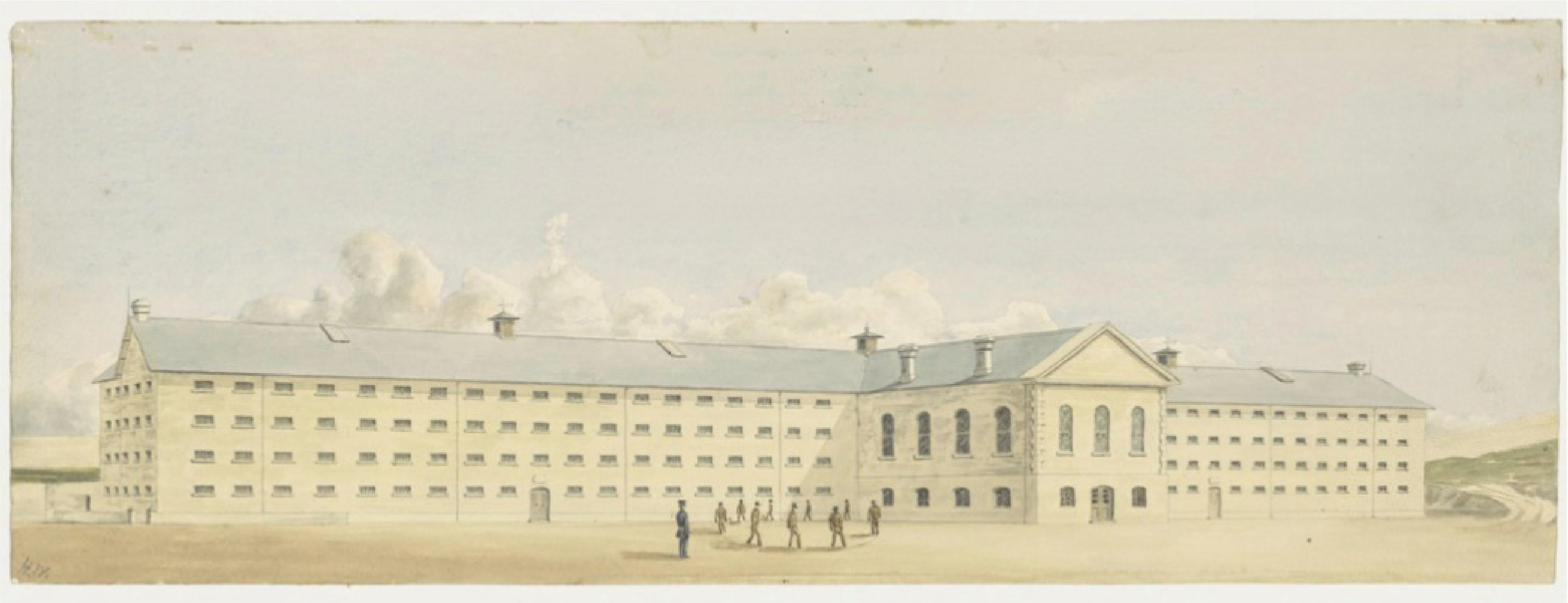
On 28 July 1907, nine-year-old Annie died. The doctor who was called to the house issued a certificate stating that the cause of death was diphtheria. Following Annie, Olive, aged 5, died on 16 October 1907 with the cause of death once again diphtheria. The following winter, Arthur, aged 15, fell ill with the same symptoms. Taking longer to succumb to his ailments, Arthur passed away in October 1908. Finding this suspicious and fearing poisoning was the true cause of death, doctors requested an autopsy be conducted. Unaware that Rendell was not Arthur's biological mother, the doctors agreed to allow Rendell to attend. Halfway through the autopsy, Rendell put a stop to the investigation, stating that the doctors had seen all they needed to see and thus ensuring that nothing incriminating was found.

Crimes coming to light

In April 1909, further suspicion arose when George Morris began experiencing a sore throat after drinking a cup of tea. Frightened, George ran away, finding safety in the arms of his mother.

Noticing the absence of the boy, neighbours began to inquire as to his whereabouts. Morris subsequently reported his son missing, sparking an investigation that uncovered the cold-blooded acts of Rendell.

Police eventually found George with his mother, and he told the officers what life was really like living with



Convict prison, accommodation 870, Fremantle, Western Australia, designed and erected by Captains Henderson & Wray, R.E. Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia

The gravesite of Eric Edgar Cooke and Martha Rendell, marked simply '409', at Fremantle Cemetery, Western Australia. Image courtesy of Nachoman-au.

Rendell, shedding light on what really happened to his three siblings. His statement led to an inquiry into the deaths of Annie, Olive and Arthur, and the eventual conviction – and hanging – of Martha Rendell.

Murder in cold blood

It was soon discovered that Rendell had murdered the three children by poisoning them with 'spirits of salts' (hydrochloric acid), causing slow and agonisingly painful deaths. Rendell told the children that the spirits of salts was 'medicine'.

During the investigation, the bodies of Annie, Olive and Arthur were eventually exhumed on 3 July 1909, and new autopsies were conducted on each child. The findings from Arthur's autopsy were clear; it was uncovered that poison had been administered, which had caused inflammation as well as haemorrhage of the bowel. Witnesses had also come forward and testified to seeing Rendell swabbing Arthur's throat, which was then followed by agonised screams and cries for help. Unfortunately, however, the results of the autopsies of the two little girls were inconclusive due to the decomposition of the bodies.

Following the evidence obtained from Arthur's autopsy, both Rendell and Thomas Morris were charged with his murder and stood trial. Many incriminating testimonies were made against Rendell, including by the arresting officer Harry Mann, who testified that Rendell 'delighted in seeing her victims writhe in agony, and from it derived sexual satisfaction'.

Rendell was eventually found guilty of the crime by the all-male jury despite the lack of motive, while Morris was acquitted as it was believed he had been unaware of Rendell's actions.

Aftermath

After Rendell was found guilty, she was sent to Fremantle Prison, where she spent her brief jail time in prayer and protesting her innocence. On 6 October 1909, Rendell was hanged; her last words were 'I will die brave'. Coincidentally, this day was the first anniversary of Arthur's death. Rendell was then buried in Fremantle Cemetery, and shares a grave with serial killer Eric Edgar Cooke who, for unknown reasons, was buried there more than 50 years later.

Today, she is Fremantle Prison's best-known female prisoner. Her legend lives on, with many believing that a strange defect in a glass windowpane overlooking the prison yard is, in fact, the ghost of Rendell, with the illusion bearing a striking resemblance to the murderer.

Controversy

As with many crimes that shape a community, there is quite a bit of controversy surrounding the trial and conviction on Martha Rendell. Many have argued that there was just not enough evidence for a conviction, with no murder scene, no motive and the influence of the media in painting Rendell as a 'scarlet woman' and 'wicked stepmother', and reporting on her amorality. The public was outraged. In the eyes of the all-male jury, Rendell was a despicable character – an unattractive, older home-wrecker who abandoned her own children to live in sin with a married man. Rendell's vilification, whether justified or not, certainly influenced her fate. ○

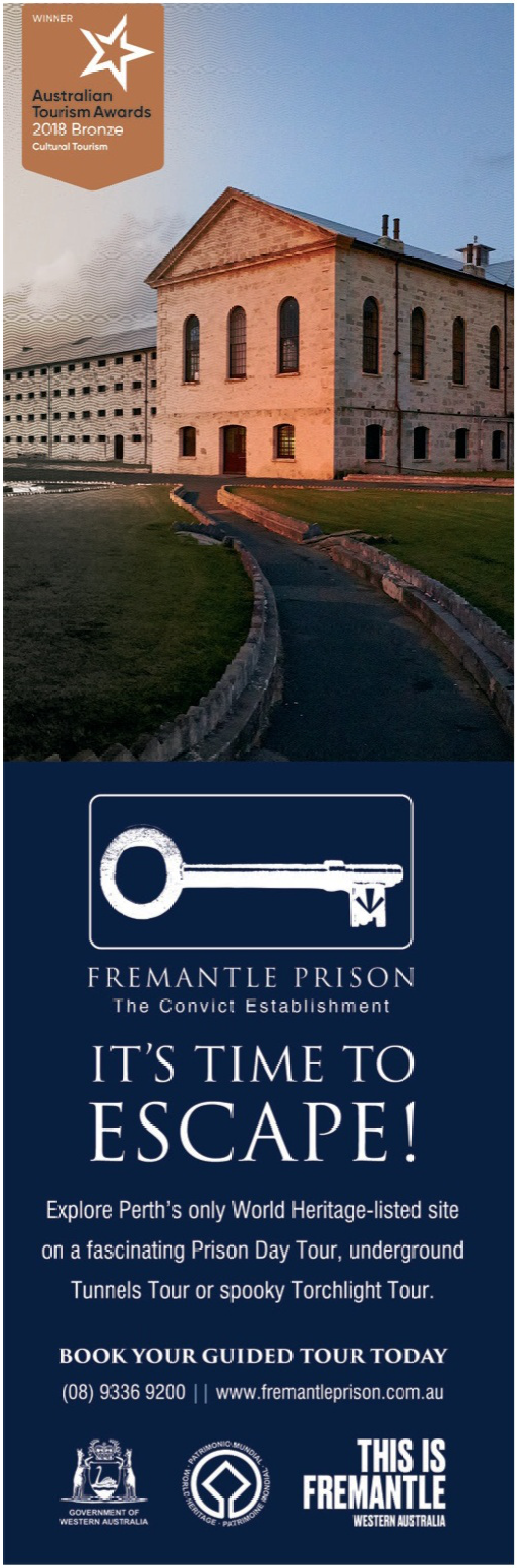
Delve into 140 years of Western Australian criminal history

Built by convicts in the 1850s and closed as a maximum security prison in 1991, a tour of the World Heritage–listed Fremantle Prison is a 'must do' activity for any traveller to Western Australia. Whether you are into history or fascinated by true crime stories, the Prison has a range of tours to keep you captivated.

Discover the convict-era history of the Prison on the Convict Prison Tour, explore the daily life of modern-era prisoners on the Behind Bars Tour, or get inside the criminal mind and learn about some of Fremantle Prison's more notorious inmates on the True Crime Tour.

For a spookier experience, you can't go past an eerie night-time Torchlight Tour, where a guide delves into the darker side of the Prison's history; or, if you're looking for a bit of adventure, you can descend 20 metres underground to explore a labyrinth of water tunnels built by prisoners on the Tunnels Tour.

Fremantle Prison's Gatehouse complex is free to enter and features two visitor museums, a cafe, an award-winning gift shop and exhibitions in the Prison Gallery. The current exhibition, 'Protest and Unrest at Fremantle Prison', is on show until November 2020 and explores the history of riots and protests at the Prison. ●



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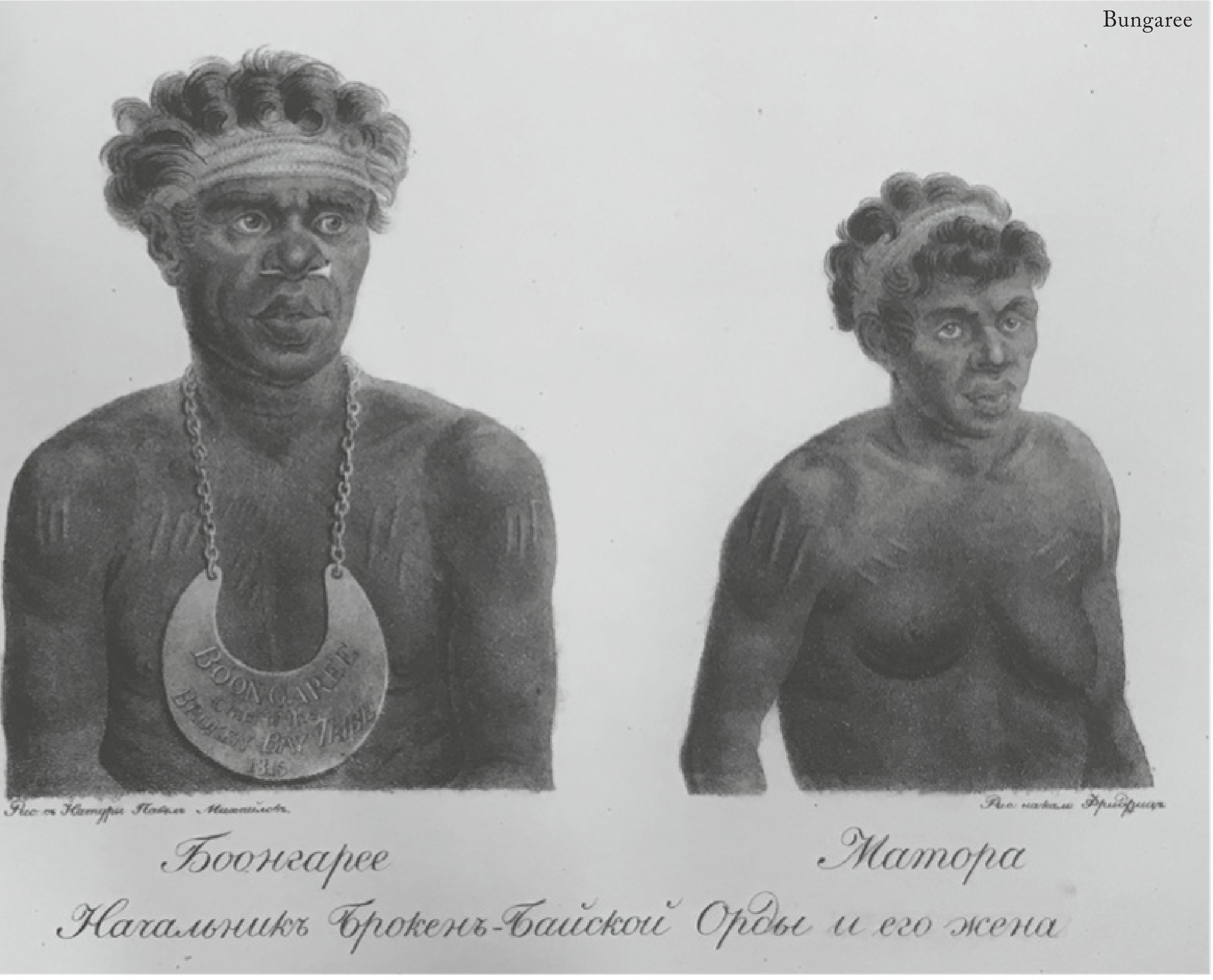
Reconstructing the past

Historical records notoriously favour the record keepers, so how can we re-examine the past for a more accurate understanding of our history?

By Danielle Clode and Gillian Dooley,
College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University

One of the great challenges of writing history – whether creatively or academically – is dealing with the inherent biases and gaps in the records. Inevitably, historical records tend to favour the record keepers – the literate, the wealthy and the powerful. Those who do not leave written records – the poor or uneducated, the oppressed and marginalised, and those from non-literate cultures – find themselves either misrepresented or missing from the historical record. Worse still, this misrepresentation and omission in the primary literature perpetuates and expands itself over time in the secondary accounts.

So, how can we overcome this gap in the historical record? For our anthology, *The First Wave*, we asked contributors to develop innovative and creative ways to re-examine Australia's early coastal contact history to provide a better understanding of how Indigenous Australians reacted to, and experienced, contact from overseas.


Bungaree

Creative approaches provide one means of re-imagining past events from new perspectives. Historical fiction provides an opportunity for writers to join the dots between the sparse records and reconstruct scenarios that explore the emotional impact of first contact. Noongar author Kim Scott has provided an extract from his award-winning novel *That Deadman Dance*, envisaging the complex responses of a young local man, Bobby Wabalanginy, to European whalers in Western Australia. On the other side of the country, Catherine McKinnon revisits Bass and Flinders's 'discovery' of the Illawarra area and encounters with local tribes, seen through the eyes of Bass's servant, Will Martin, in an extract from her novel *Storyland*.

18+

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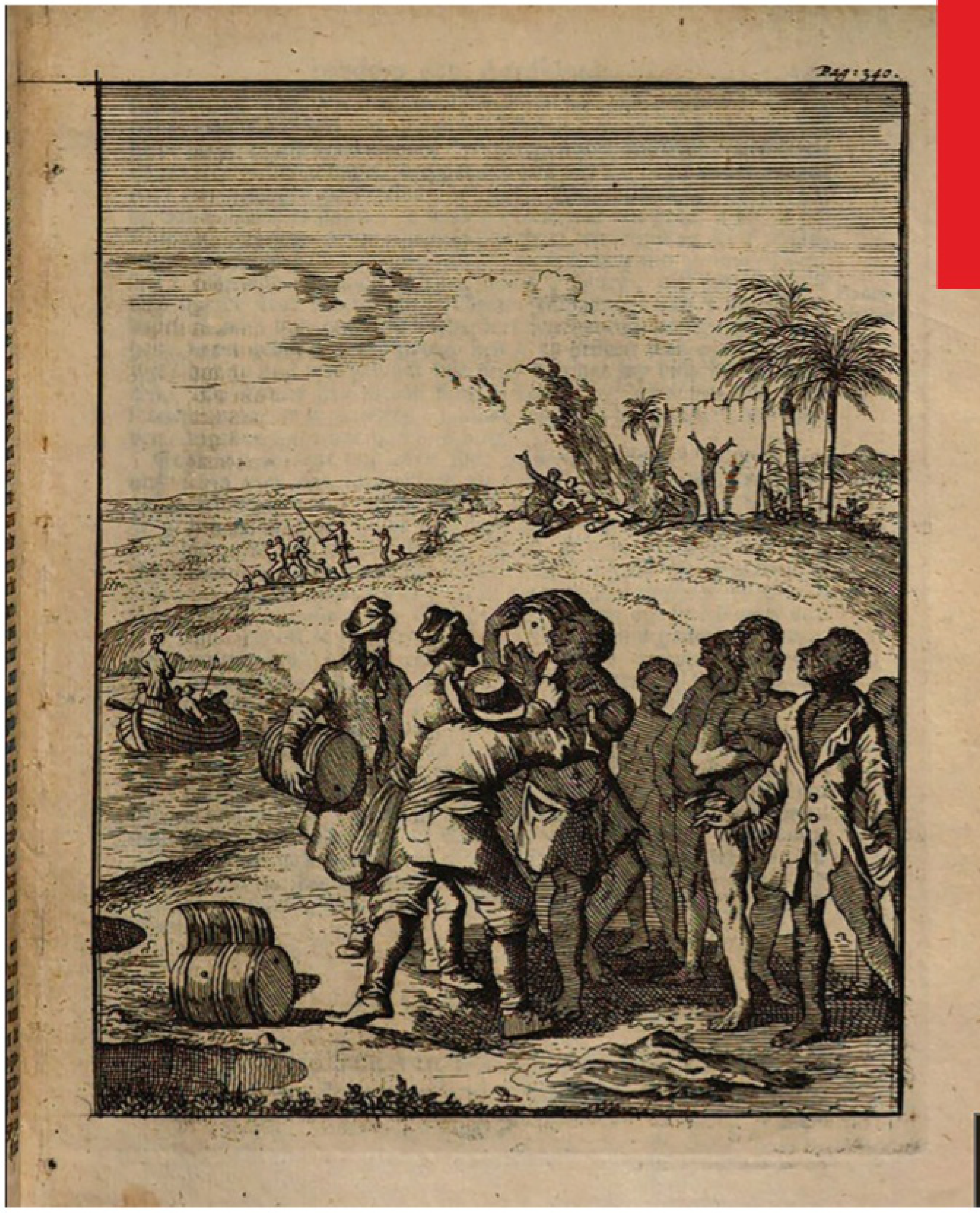

Right: Dampier

Three poems by Yankunytjatjara poet Ali Cobby Eckermann reframe the emotional reverberations of first contact from an Indigenous perspective:

> *the moment you jumped from your boat*
> *and landed on the shore*
> *your footprint stood next to mine*
>
> *in the morning my footprint had disappeared*
> *and yours remained*
> *it would not leave*

'Footprint', page 193

Molly Murn's poems, 'Landing Party' and 'Terra Firma', respond to, and are inspired by, Eckermann's poems, referencing the dislocation and displacement of the migration experience.

The process of exploration itself also provides a very different emotional context for first contact. Unlike colonisation, it is a temporary and ephemeral contact for the individuals concerned. Even so, many of the European explorers were aware that they would, by their very actions, open the door to waves of new arrivals, each one bringing its own challenges and damage.

Understanding the intellectual and emotional frameworks that shaped these explorers' expectations provides us with new ways of interpreting the records they have left behind, many of which are the only accounts of communities before any significant impact of colonisation.

Daniel Hempel explores the utopian influence of Quirós on explorers' expectations, while Valerie Munt investigates the influence of Romanticism on the European sensibilities. Patrick Kaye discusses Banks and his 'grand tour' of the globe, while Gillian Dooley unpacks the notion of empathy, and its limitations, in Flinders's interactions with the Australians he encountered.

Other contributors reverse this perspective, considering instead the social context for Indigenous interpretations of first contact. Even though these contacts are often only described through European accounts, interpreting them from an Indigenous framework radically changes the interpretation of everyone's actions.

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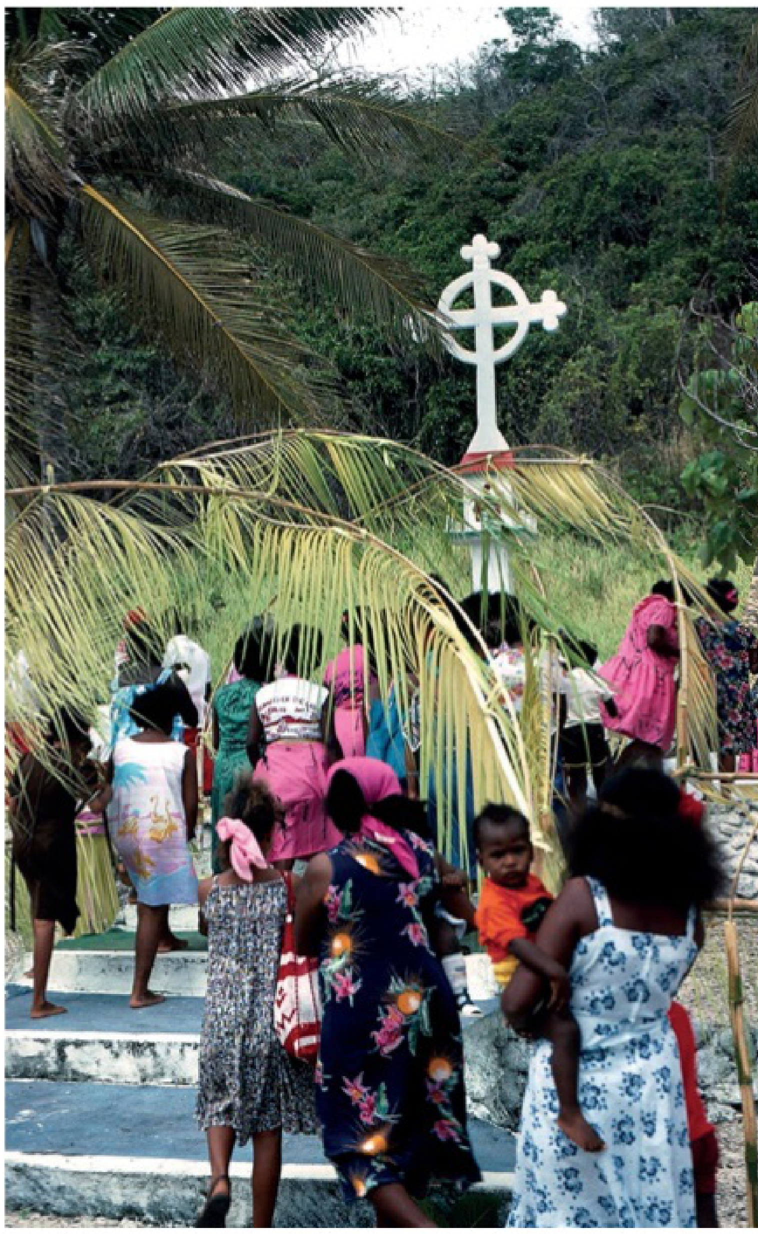

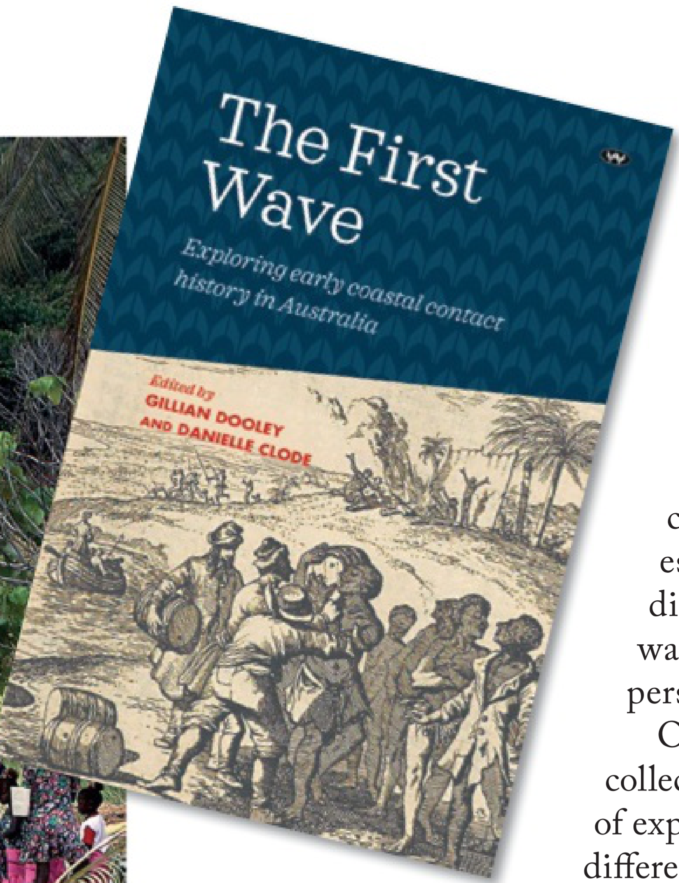

Skye Krichauff uses this approach to great effect in her work on the Narungga people of Yorke Peninsula, reinterpreting European behaviour within an Indigenous code of conduct. Sarah McMaster's essay on interpretations of fire in Victoria shifts the simplistic view of fire as either 'wild' or 'domestic' to being part of a sophisticated pattern of fire use, including land management, warfare and communication.

Contemporary art has proven to be a powerful way for Indigenous artists to re-examine first contact. These approaches are explored in Melinda Graefe's analysis of Michael Cook's work, and Lisa Chandler's account of artists re-examining the arrival of James Cook on the east coast, such as Reg Mombassa, Adam Hill, Peter Hudson, Euan MacLeod and Michael Cook.

Music, too, is a valuable source of cultural knowledge, as discussed in Aaron's Corn and Brian Djaŋgirrawuy Garawirrtja's essay on Macassan influences in the Yolŋu homelands of Arnhem land. This analysis pushes back the concept of first contact by many centuries before Europeans.

The extensive experience of north-coast communities with overseas contact may well have shaped different, more cynical, responses to early European explorers compared with those on the more isolated south coast. Peter Sutton's photo essay reinterprets the tangible evidence of early missionaries to the west coast of Cape York (diaries, photos, maps) through the current knowledge and oral history of the Wik people. Similarly, we republish the account of missionaries arriving in Torres Strait by Indigenous leader George Mye in conjunction with an essay by Anna Shnukal discussing how this event was utilised to support personal and political goals.

One of the features of this collection is the sheer diversity of experiences reported in different parts of Australia. The more isolated south-coast communities seem to have been more mystified and cautious of their unexpected visitors, as discussed in two essays by Ian Clark, Fred Cahir and Wendy Wright.

A closer reading of the traces of the past often provides a radically different reading to our traditional expectations. Chester Schultz's research into the lives of two Aboriginal women, Kalungku and Emma, provides a vastly more nuanced perspective of female lives, and the men who sought to exploit and defend them.

Similarly, Mark Dunn's account of Bungaree reconfigures our assumptions of European exploration and the role Indigenous guides often played in that process. Rowena Lennox's discussion of the dingoes of K'gari (or Fraser Island) reveals the long heritage first encounters can leave on our attitudes and approaches to particular areas.

Finally, three other contributions use fictional techniques to revisit historical events in a genre we've dubbed 'scholarly fiction'. These are not so much works of traditional historical fiction as attempts to reconstruct past events through fiction based on as much of the historical records as is known, and use referencing and exegetical statements to contextualise the basis for the work.

Serendipitously, these three stories weave through each other, sharing sources and events. Susan Davis and Gary Crew examine Oswald Brierly's accounts of Barbara Crawford Thompson's time with the Muralag in Torres Strait, interspersing Thompson's perspective with Brierly's in interspersed diary entries.

Danielle Clode's re-imagining of the origin of cooperative hunting with killer whales in Eden on the New South Wales South Coast also reconstructs a female voice, drawn from an account in Brierly's diary of his early days as a whaling station manager.

In 'Accidental Explorers', Gary Crew and Peter Moore interrogate the accounts of Pamphlett and Finnegan in 'discovering' the Brisbane River through the device of a fictional interview.

We may never know how much can be recovered from what has been lost. The missing pieces can never truly be restored, but we can only attempt to reconstruct the past from fragments and traces left behind. ○

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Ethnic newspapers printed in Australia, 1974. Image courtesy of NAA-A12111, 11974134

Migrant and minority stories

The ‘extended family’ of press history

By Catherine Dewhirst, University of Southern Queensland, and Richard Scully, University of New England

IL GLOBO
IL CORRIERE
settegiorni
LA FIAMMA
LA RONDINE
la voce d'Italia

La Voce d'Italia.
Image courtesy of NAA

As anyone researching local or family history will have found, Trove is a wonderful resource for tracking all sorts of stories from Australia's past, including stories of the migrant and minority press of Australia.

First given real attention by Miriam Gilson and Jerzy Zubrzycki back in 1967 (in *The Foreign-Language Press in Australia, 1848–1964*), many of these lesser-known or forgotten newspapers are being given a new lease on life by digitisation, and by Trove's ability to bring them online to a mass readership. This is critical because it has been through newspapers such as the Italian-language *Il Globo*, the Spanish-language *El Expreso*, or the government-sponsored *The New Australian*, that the families and communities of multicultural Australia have found a voice, and recorded their everyday lives for posterity.

But 'minority' status doesn't just extend to the foreign-language press. Regional and rural papers – like the *Bendigo Advertiser* or *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* – are also made more visible by Trove. These regional and local papers contain mountains of information about key individuals, businesses and families, stretching back well into the 19th century, and provide an important corrective to the dominant, metropolitan newspaper cultures of the major cities.

There are also other kinds of 'minority' presses whose status has suffered because of the nature of the newspaper and its contents. The satirical press, for instance, epitomised in 19th-century Australia by the various imitators of the London *Punch* magazine, have scarcely received the attention they deserve. The *Melbourne Punch*, *Sydney Punch*, *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, *Adelaide Punch*, various versions of a *Hobart Town Punch* – and even a *Ballarat Punch* and an *Ipswich Punch* – provide glimpses into something we seldom see: what kept the Victorians *amused*.

Likewise, the significance of refugee voices remains largely hidden from the general public. When the Australian Department of Immigration set up *The New Australian* in 1949 to facilitate the assimilation of displaced persons (DPs) from war-torn Europe, no-one could have expected the results. The archives reveal myriad stories from an enormous volume of original letters DPs sent into the newspaper's 'My Australia' and 'Write to us' columns – many in broken English – showing that the government's view of 'assimilation' was far from their minds. People wrote in, desperate for information on the whereabouts of lost family members; to find basic accommodation and work; to connect with others who had experienced such trauma; to reprimand the government for insulting their intelligence; and even to seek information on patenting inventions!

This brings up another dimension to the history of 'minority' print culture: the research process. Not all migrant and minority newspapers, magazines or journals are available on Trove. Many have been lost or were seized by the authorities and have never resurfaced. The little-known early Russian press, for instance, was radical in nature, and attracted the federal and state governments' attention for suspected sedition. Not surprisingly, newspapers like the 1912 *Ekho Avstralii* (Echo of Australia) and the 1918 *Deviaty Val* (Ninth Wave) were

Top: *La Fiamma*, Italian newspaper published in Australia, 1975. Image courtesy of NAA – A6180, 24107572

Bottom: *La Fiamma*, Italian newspaper published in Australia, 1975. Image courtesy of NAA – A6180, 24107571

LIFE SAVERS
LA FIAMMA

in print for only four months and four weeks respectively (remember, this was the time of the Russian Revolution and the first 'Red Scare'). Fragments of articles and official reports from the archives help to piece together the turbulent life stories of various editors of seven Russian newspapers, which gives us fresh perspectives on Australian society and culture during the era of World War I.

In other words, studying the migrant and minority press is a much more dynamic process than simply replicating stories from their pages. Other sources – archival documents, texts from other countries, firsthand accounts – form a central piece in the puzzle of this press, especially given so many early newspapers are actually missing, thus enabling the understanding of the breadth and scope of Australia's multicultural past. Indeed, during World War II, *L'Italiano* was seized as part of the police raids on the two Italian migrant editors' homes and businesses, leaving every edition of the paper missing, without a trace. This has subsequently led to both the newspaper and its editors being stigmatised as fascists. Yet, the National Archives' internment records show a number of layers to this newspaper's life cycle.

The marginalised cases of newspaper enterprises and minority community voices are far from isolated from the mainstream; instead, they are very much an integrated legacy of Australia's development as a nation and multicultural society. What this speaks to us about is a much more complex history of inter- and cross-cultural relations within Australia from the very beginnings of colonisation.

The cultural heritage of a number of migrant and minority community newspapers, in turn, tells us about Australia's cultural heritage. As our knowledge continues to expand, and take in more of these minority and migrant papers, Trove and keen groups of researchers are only adding to our understanding of the extended family of Australia's press culture. ○

***A history of the migrant and minority press in Australia*, edited by the authors, is due to be published in two volumes by Palgrave Macmillan.**

Map of Aalsmeer (Netherlands), circa 1700. Image courtesy of Noord-Hollands Archief

On paper, on screen, on site

Family history in the 21st century

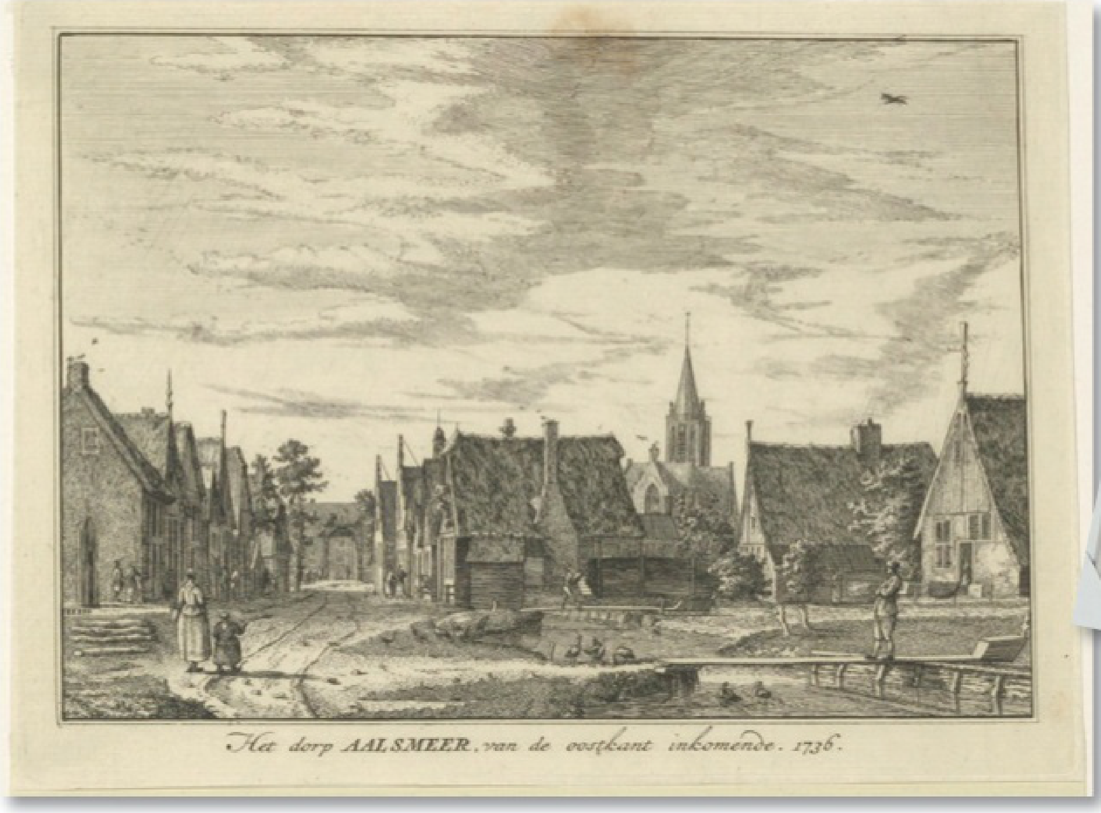
By Dr Imogen Wegman

Late last year, I found myself in Amsterdam for a few days. I was on holiday, and I had spent the previous few weeks exploring European castles and Christmas markets. As a historian, I am well suited to winter holidays. I spend them pottering around in museums and enjoying the emptiness of grand sites that are usually crowded in summer with no room to just stop and stare at the strange details only a historian could love. But on arriving in Amsterdam, my brain ticked back into action and insisted I address some of the family history mysteries of my Dutch heritage.

I only ever met one of my grandparents – my maternal grandmother. She was a feisty Belfast woman who sometimes hinted at wild stories (and had several unexplained engagement rings in a jewellery box). I now, of course, regret not asking more questions when I could have. Instead, I'm asking questions of the records to try to find some missing stories from all sides of my family.

People enter into family history research for any number of reasons. For some, it's an exercise in self-discovery, while others have an interest in the history of a time or place and use their family as an entry point. Some, like me, enjoy the stories of individuals but have complicated feelings about how those stories affect who they are today. But really, motives for entering into a family history search are almost irrelevant, outweighed by the benefits of delving deep into the past.

There is a genre of history for every person, but sometimes it is not the one they have been exposed to at school or during early-adult attempts to appear cultured.


Het dorp AALSMEER, van de oostkant inkomende. 1736.

A sketch of Aalsmeer, 1736. Image courtesy of Noord-Hollands Archief

The front of the house in Aalsmeer, a few years before my father was born. Image courtesy of Noord-Hollands Archief

Technically, history covers everything that has happened until the moment you read this word. That is a daunting thought. Family history can be a gentle starting point to finding the historical period, place or theme that really interests you.

In my role as Associate Lecturer, I encourage students to think beyond their immediate ancestors. Family history is more than a list of names and dates. Those are only the starting point from which each family history researcher can spread their questioning wings.

Census data might suggest that upheaval has occurred between censuses – children have died, the family has moved. On further research, it becomes clear that an epidemic swept through the region. Before you know it, you are elbow-deep in medical histories, then drawn further into the gruesome world of medieval treatments.

As new family historians enter into the vast world of baptismal records, maps and family heirlooms, they must also learn new languages. They learn the languages of record keeping and of computers. Many of our students are retirees, finally enjoying the time to pursue questions they have wondered about for many years. Today, it is possible to conduct a huge amount of research from home, as archives and libraries generously make their records available online. Archives are increasingly using digitisation as a means of preservation by reducing access to the fragile originals.

Learning to access this information online, however, can be daunting for those who rarely use computers. We teach our whole diploma online, with students across Australia, and one of my favourite parts is seeing the incidental skills our students learn. They are thrown into this new digital world, flail for a moment, and then start to paddle with increasing confidence. We hear stories of grandparents and grandkids bonding over learning to use online resources, or isolated farmers connecting to a larger world in their moments of free time. They arrive wanting to learn about their ancestors' worlds, but depart with the ability to better connect with the world around them, as well.

My time in Amsterdam was driven by some very simple questions – I wanted to learn more about how Dutch records work, what is available online, and what isn't. But my father had also asked me to see the house he grew up in. On his birthday, I hopped on a train and a bus, walked around a corner and found myself in what is now a commuter town near Schiphol Airport. His house was easy to find, right on the main street. There was no sign of life, and I was not brave enough to knock on the door. I dithered, walking to and fro a number of times before retreating to a cafe. While writing my order, the server asked what brought me to this nondescript town. Her response was quick.

'Oh, I know who lives there, I think. I'll ring Mum and check.'

Five minutes later, I had a name and an invitation to drop by. Twenty minutes later, I was in the roof space of my father's childhood home. Digital records are fantastic and open whole new worlds to us, but sometimes there is nothing like seeing the original. ○

The house in Aalsmeer today. Image courtesy of Imogen Wegman

Dr Imogen Wegman is an Associate Lecturer in humanities at the University of Tasmania, within the Diploma of Family History. For more information, visit utas.edu.au/family-history.

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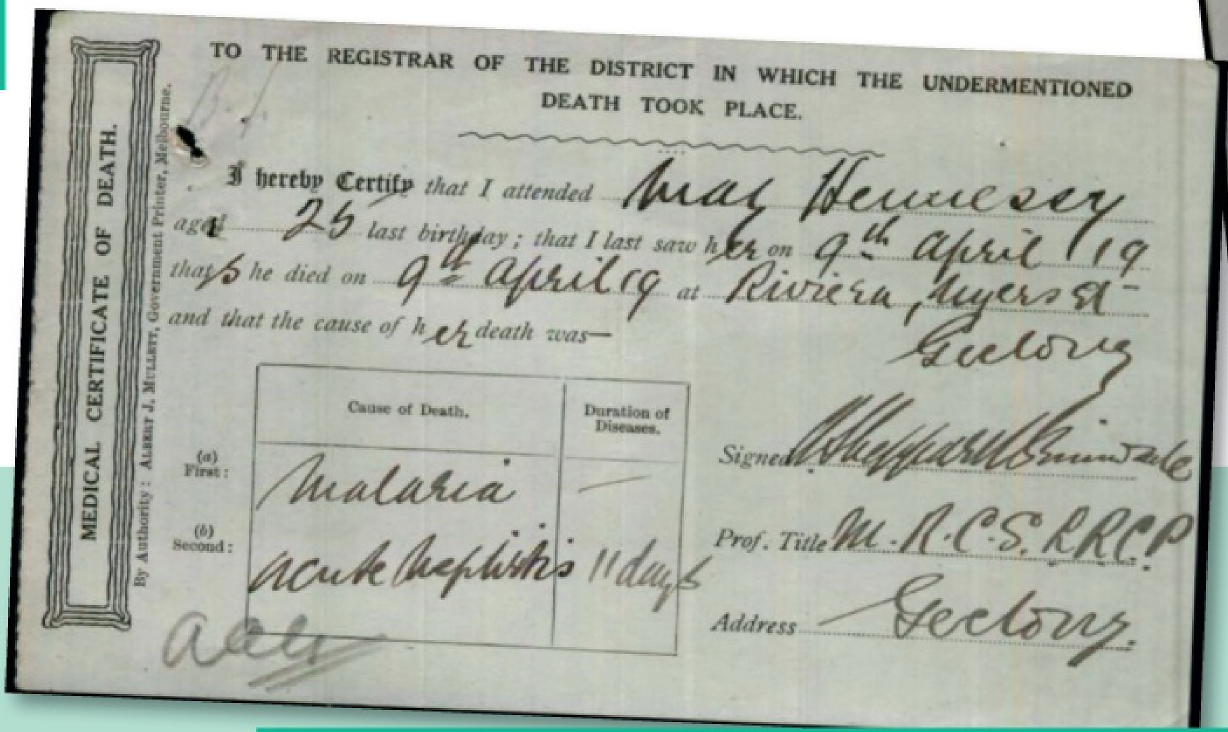


MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.

By Authority: Albert J. Mullett, Government Printer, Melbourne.

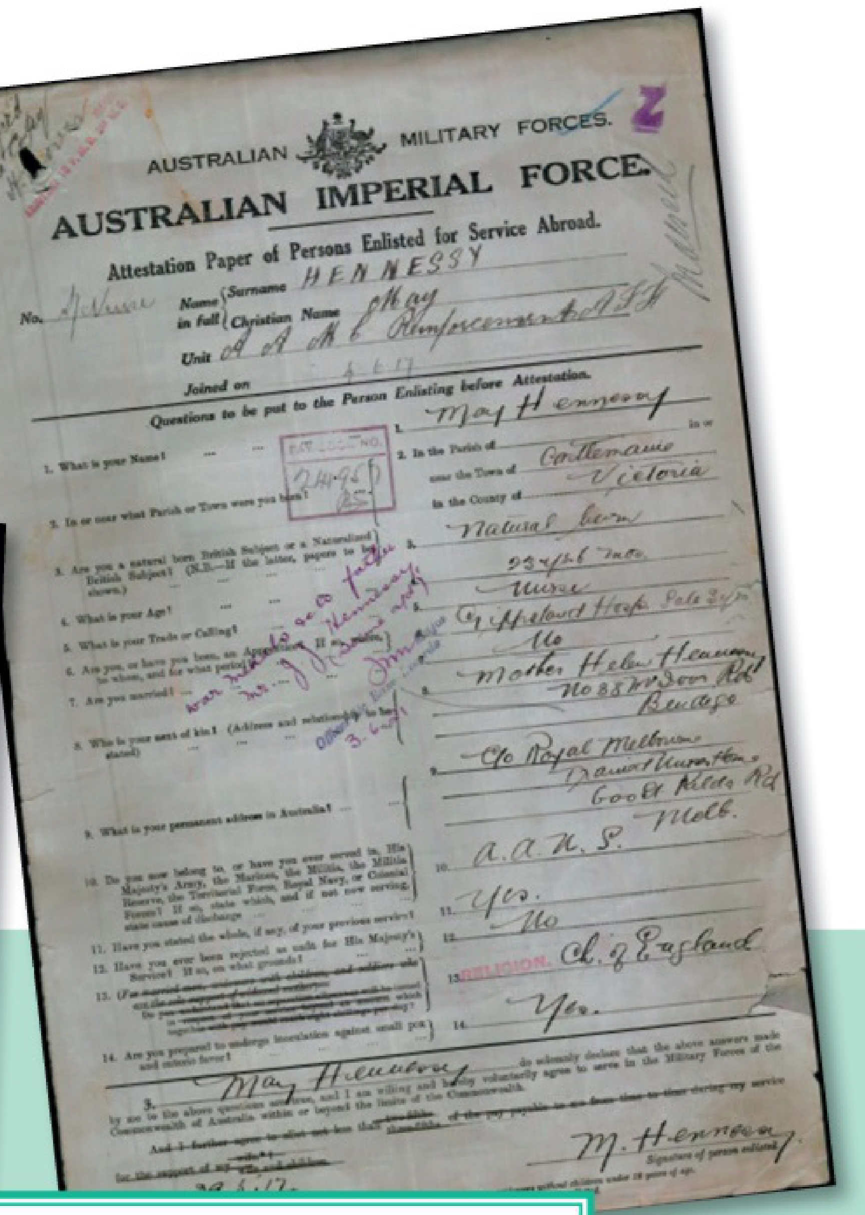
TO THE REGISTRAR OF THE DISTRICT IN WHICH THE UNDERMENTIONED DEATH TOOK PLACE.

I hereby Certify that I attended May Hennessy aged 25 last birthday; that I last saw her on 9th april 19 that she died on 9th april 19 at Riviera, Myers St Geelong and that the cause of her death was—

	Cause of Death.	Duration of Diseases.
(a) First:	Malaria	—
(b) Second:	acute nephritis	11 days

Prof. Title M.R.C.S. L.R.C.P.

Address Geelong.



AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. Sister

Name in full: Surname HENNESSY

Christian Name May

Unit A A N S Reinforcements AIF

Joined on 4.6.17

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? May Hennessy
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? In the Parish of Castlemaine near the Town of Victoria in the County of
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) Natural born
4. What is your Age? 23 yrs 6 mos
5. What is your Trade or Calling? Nurse
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? Gippsland Hosp Sale 3 yrs
7. Are you married? No
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address and relationship to be stated) Mother Helen Hennessy No 88 Wilson Rd Bendigo
9. What is your permanent address in Australia? C/o Royal Melbourne District Nursing Home 600 St Kilda Rd Melb.
10. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge A.A.N.S.
11. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? Yes.
12. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No
13. RELIGION. Ch. of England
14. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? Yes.

I, May Hennessy, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

M. Hennessy

Signature of person enlisted.

SISTER MAY HENNESSY

The story of an ANZAC nurse who paid the ultimate price.

By Lauren Morris

May Hennessy was born in 1894 in Castlemaine and grew up in nearby Bendigo. Daughter of James and Helen Hennessy, May was the eldest of six children, with three younger sisters – one of which died in infancy – and two younger brothers, who would both go on to fight in World War II. May went to Longlea State School where some of her cousins also attended. A number of her cousins would also volunteer for service in World War I, with four losing their lives.

At the age of 19, May began her training as a nurse at Gippsland Hospital, Sale. Why she went all the way to Sale for her training when Bendigo and Melbourne both had nurse training hospitals is unknown. Maybe this was her trying to seek some adventure. During her training, May was nominated for the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses Association's Sister Madge Kelly memorial prize, from which she received an honourable mention.

In January 1917, May graduated and moved to a nurse staff house on St Kilda Road in Melbourne, and shortly after, at age 23, she enlisted with the Australian Army Nursing Staff (AANS) as a staff nurse on 4 June 1917. Mere days later, on 12 June, she left for her service aboard the RMS *Mooltan* bound for Salonika.

Salonika was one of the most difficult postings for AANS nurses. There were no Australian soldiers based on the Macedonian front; however, Britain requested that Australia send nurses to relieve the British, French and Canadian nurses. The patients in Salonika were British soldiers and Bulgarian prisoners of war. This would have been a difficult placement for May, especially since a prime motivation for nurses joining the AANS was that

Right: RMS *Mooltan*.

Bottom: Studio portrait of Staff Nurse (SN) Christine Erica Strom, Australian Army Nursing Service.
Image courtesy of Australian War Memorial

R.M.S. MOOLTAN

they wanted to care for Australian soldiers. The fact that May had several cousins serving must have also been a prime motivator for her joining the cause.

Upon arrival, May would have been impressed by the picturesque location; however, she would soon find that little preparation had been made for the nurses' arrival. Tents had not been erected, some nurses had to sleep on the ground and wards were not in order. One nurse's experience was quoted in the *Darling Downs Gazette* in 1917: 'I am awfully glad not to have to stay in Salonika. You should see the main street in Salonika – decaying cabbage leaves are filth fostering in the sun. Egypt is a king to Salonika'.

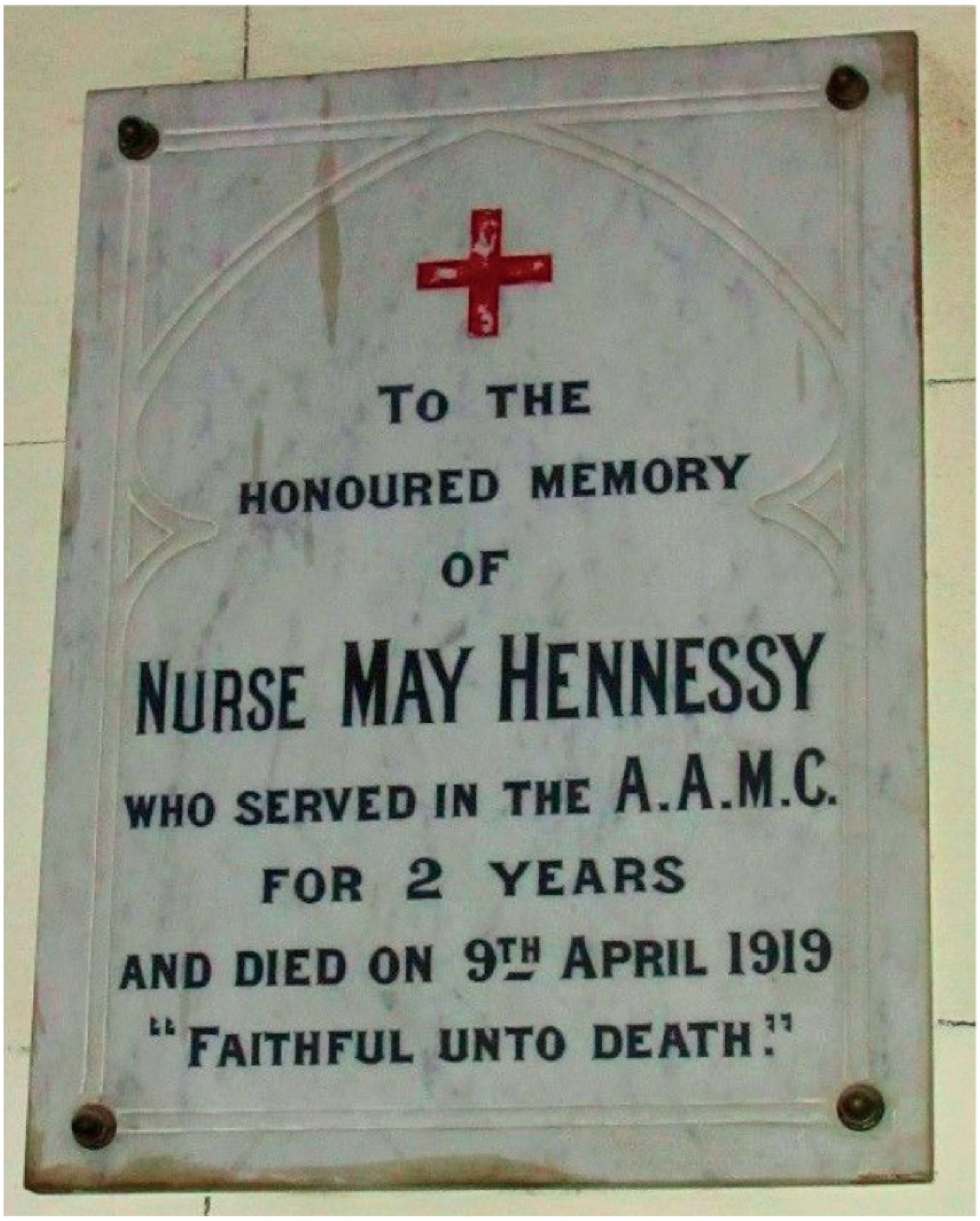
Conditions only became worse, when shortly after the nurses' arrival, a fire spread through the township of Salonika, leaving many of the townspeople homeless, putting further strain on the nurses' resources. The fire was said to be a result of Bulgarian bombings and destroyed two-thirds of the buildings in the city. Twenty-five thousand people became homeless, and many of the nurses were distressed by the plight of the refugees. Some of the nurses took food to the homeless when they could.

Conditions were also difficult for May and her fellow nurses due to Salonika's climate. In the summer, they would experience desert heat, while in the winter, they would experience strong Vardar winds, severe cold and snow. As a result of the conditions, many nurses would go on to contract malaria. While many nurses would suffer long-term effects and disability as a result of contracting malaria, May would pay the ultimate price.

> *While May and her friends would have had very difficult days working in Salonika's conditions, they were also able to enjoy some leisure time*

A typical day for the nurses would begin at 6 am with reveille and breakfast. May would start work on the wards at 7 am, have a half-hour lunch break at around 12.30 pm, and then work on the wards until 4 pm. If she was on night shift, she would have begun working on the wards at 7 pm. Rations for the nurses included bread, meat, jam, tinned milk, and some fruit and vegetables; however, once a week, the ration was only bully beef and army biscuits. There were also times of entertainment. Concerts such as the Joybell's Concert Party visited, and Christmas and Easter were celebrated. There was also the opportunity for the nurses to visit the township of Salonika for shopping and walks. The diary of staff nurse Christine Erica Storm notes they were allowed to go into town once every two months, and she reports in her diary of going into town shopping with May and others:

Half day. Melv. And I went into Sal with White, Hennessy and some others. We sat in the front with the driver and loved it. Bit dusty, but not as much as we expected. Went ordnance – took snap of Corporal having his boots cleaned … went Italian canteen, Kodak, tearooms … brought various oddments at various shops.



TO THE
HONOURED MEMORY
OF
NURSE MAY HENNESSY
WHO SERVED IN THE A.A.M.C.
FOR 2 YEARS
AND DIED ON 9TH APRIL 1919
"FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH."

While May and her friends would have had very difficult days working in Salonika's conditions, they were also able to enjoy some leisure time.

May would not go on to travel to France and England, however, as Storm would following the war. May contracted malaria in late 1918. She began to make a recovery and was reported to be convalescing on 22 January 1919. She was evacuated from Salonika and departed for Australia on 22 February 1919. During the voyage home, her condition again began to deteriorate. Upon arrival in Australia on 31 March 1919, May was transferred to the Rivera private hospital in Geelong. It was there that she died nine days later on 9 April 1919 of malaria complicated by dysentery and kidney inflammation. May was only 25 years old. Her funeral is reported to be one of the largest seen in Bendigo at the time, and the details were recorded in several newspapers. *The Gippsland Times* reported the following:

> *…The late Sister Hennessy, who had nobly responded to the call of her country and went abroad to do duty in the hospitals. There was a large number of people present when the funeral cortege moved away from the residence of the late Sister Hennessy's parents and at different points en route to the cemetery thousands of people assembled to view the mournful procession. The coffin was carried on the salvage wagon of the Bendigo Fire Brigade, and was enclosed in the Union Jack, while two wreaths were placed on the casket. One from the nursing staff at 'Osborne House', Geelong and one from the Bendigo branch of the Returned Soldiers' Association. Over one hundred wreaths were sent by organisations and sympathising friends, and these were placed in a cab, which followed the mourning coaches. A firing party, consisting of returned soldiers with their rifles, took up position at the head of the funeral. Then followed the band, consisting of members of the various city bands. Marching behind the band came the returned soldiers. At the conclusion of the service a firing party ranged up alongside the grave and, in the customary military style, fired a volley.*

Salonika was considered to be a sideshow to the postings in more well-known places like the Western Front; however, the nurses who served in Salonika were not forgotten by those at home during their service. There were many articles and letters in the newspapers at the time. One letter to the editor of *The Argus* on 27 November 1918 reads:

> *I would like to put in a word for our nurses in Salonika, many of whom have been there for more than a year, braving a bad climate and nursing cases of dreaded malaria. Could not the authorities relieve these girls and give them a turn in either England or France? Even though the war is over, nurses will be required for months, and it is only fair that these brave girls should have the opportunity to visit the land they have been so loyally working for.*

While the posting of AANS nurses to Salonika is not as well known or remembered today, Australian nurses served proudly in harsh conditions with sick patients who would have been very grateful to May and her fellow nurses for their service, as we should all be. ○

Lauren Morris has a passion for family and local history, with a particular focus on her own family's service during WWI and WWII. Lauren completed a Bachelor of Arts at Monash University in 2017, with a major in History. She lives with her husband and daughter in Melbourne, where she continues her research.

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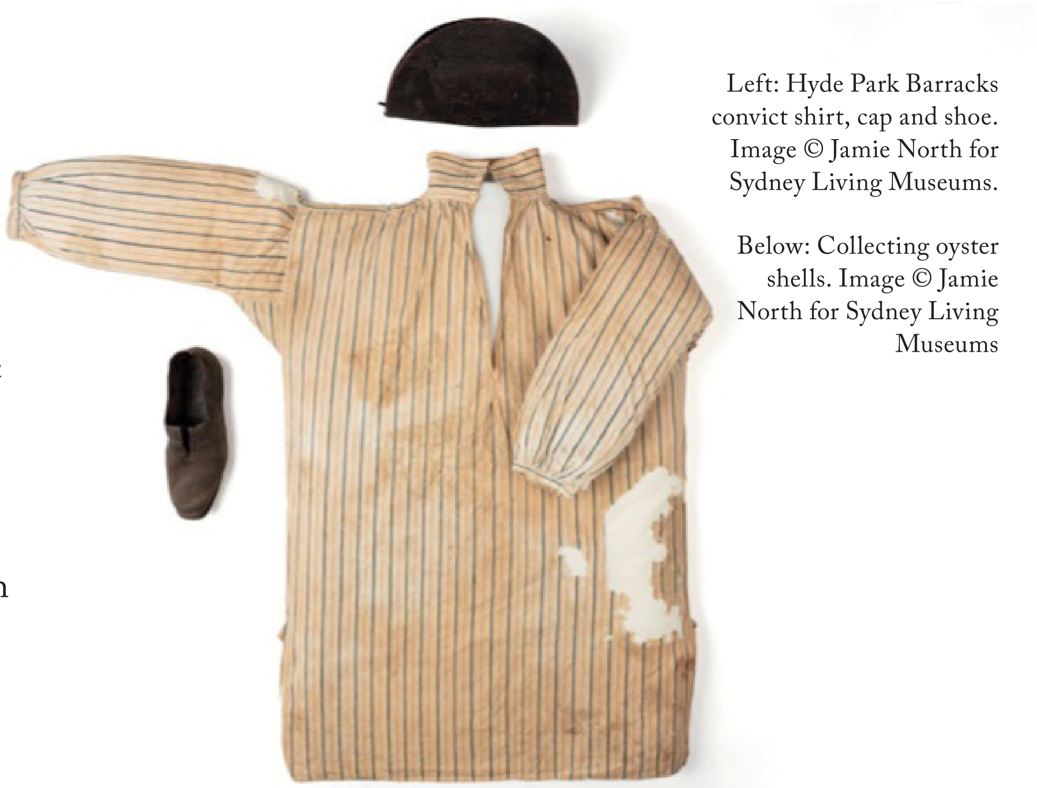
Hyde Park Barracks hammocks. Image © Daniel Boud for Sydney Living Museums

The Hyde Park Barracks

An extraordinary journey through time



Left: Hyde Park Barracks convict shirt, cap and shoe. Image © Jamie North for Sydney Living Museums.

Below: Collecting oyster shells. Image © Jamie North for Sydney Living Museums

The Hyde Park Barracks is a striking colonial building on Macquarie Street in the historic heart of Sydney. Originally a symbol of authority and control, it has an austere beauty, with warm orange bricks and tall, elegant windows beneath an imposing roof.

In 1817, Governor Lachlan Macquarie, working with convict architect Francis Greenway, issued orders to build a large three-storey dormitory to house convicts sent from Britain. Hyde Park Barracks, constructed in just two years, opened in 1819 as basic accommodation for male convicts working in Sydney, and a decade later became the centre of convict administration. The systems of labour and punishment it controlled became increasingly harsh and cruel, and the colony's expansion, fuelled by the labour of convicts and ex-convicts, inflicted violence, dispossession and loss on Aboriginal nations.

When convict transportation to New South Wales ended, the government found a new role for the building. Between 1848 and 1887, it operated as an immigration depot, offering short-term lodging for female immigrants. From 1862, it also served as an asylum for poor, sick and homeless women. Once a place of control, fear and brutality, the Barracks became a centre for social welfare for the colony and a place of hope.

The building left a mark on the thousands of people who were held, punished and sheltered there. It also contributed to a much larger story, of the restless expansion of a land-hungry colony, the complex impacts this had on Aboriginal communities, and of the colony's reliance on immigration and the provision of public charity.

Eventually, the Barracks stopped serving as an asylum and became a space for courts

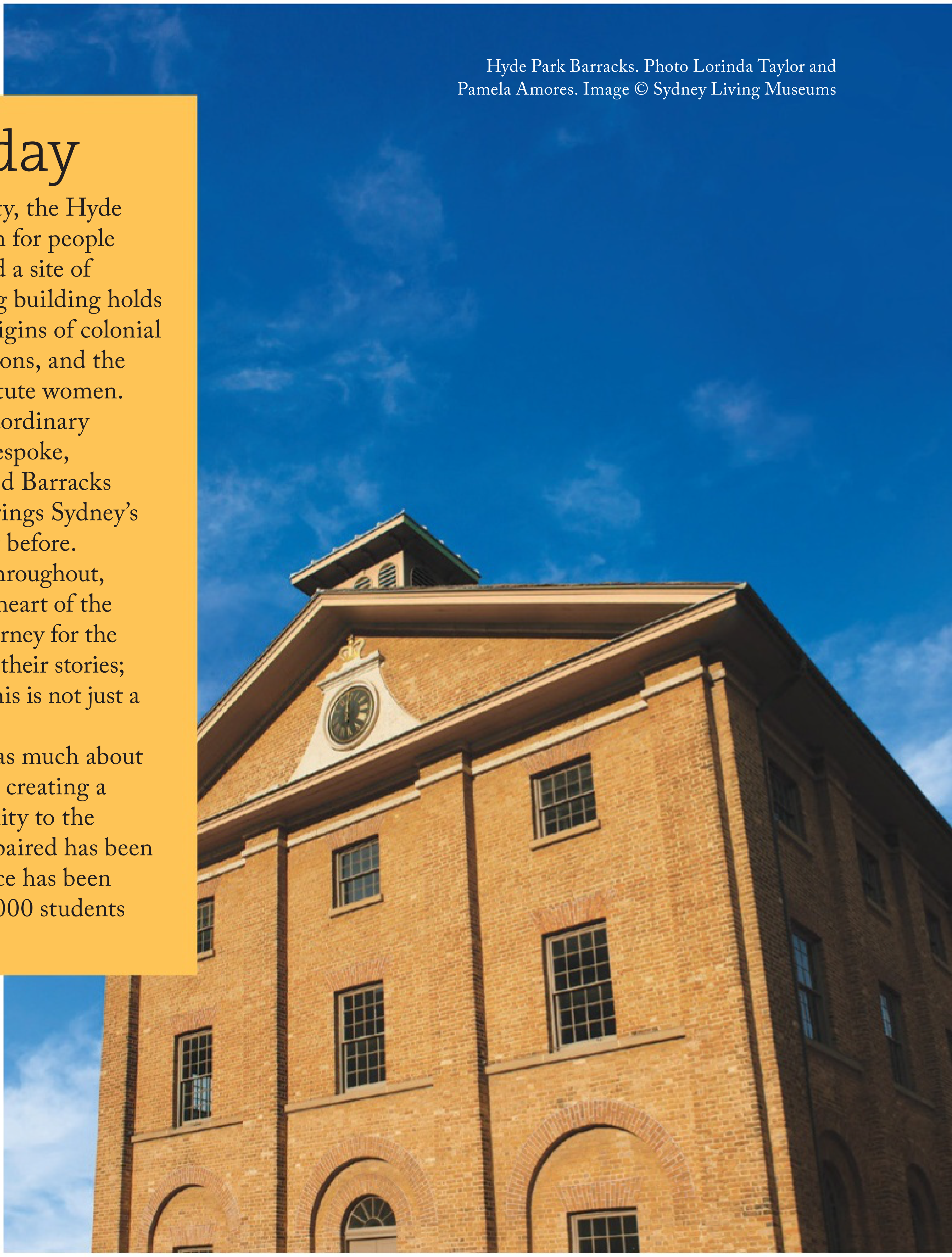
The Barracks today

Located in Sydney, Australia's oldest city, the Hyde Park Barracks is a must-visit destination for people of all ages. More than 200 years old and a site of exceptional significance, this fascinating building holds the key to understanding the convict origins of colonial Australia, its impact on Aboriginal nations, and the shelter and care of immigrant and destitute women.

Today, the Barracks delivers an extraordinary new way to experience history. Using bespoke, groundbreaking technology, the renewed Barracks redefines the heritage experience and brings Sydney's past to life more authentically than ever before.

Layered with immersive activations throughout, the museum puts personal stories at the heart of the experience, creating a deeply moving journey for the visitor. Stand where they stood; listen to their stories; and feel their defiance, awe and hope. This is not just a walk through history; it's living it.

The renewed Hyde Park Barracks is as much about stories for today's audience as it is about creating a legacy for future generations. Accessibility to the building for the vision and mobility impaired has been improved, and a dedicated learning space has been created to accommodate more than 30,000 students every year.



Hyde Park Barracks. Photo Lorinda Taylor and Pamela Amores. Image © Sydney Living Museums

and ministry buildings, before being converted into a museum in the 1990s. But its impact on the development of Australian society lives on.

An intimate collection

Almost 100,000 people – convicts, immigrants and asylum inmates – passed through the Hyde Park Barracks. As they went about their daily routines – mending or making clothes, writing letters, reading newspapers and books, smoking, eating, drinking or gambling – the Barracks became home to a giant collection of ordinary things discarded, lost or stashed away, and ultimately forgotten.

During archaeological excavations between 1979 and 1984, a treasure-trove of more than 120,000 artefacts was discovered; coins, clay pipes, children's toys and scraps of clothing that had been trapped beneath the floors and below the ground for up to 160 years.

The collection of items worn, touched and treasured by past residents is considered one of the best-preserved examples of 19th-century institutional life anywhere in the world. More than 4000 original objects will be on display in the Barracks, many for the first time, including an intact convict shirt and leather shoe.

The legacy

The Hyde Park Barracks shaped the lives of the many thousands of people who, whether by force or by choice, journeyed across the world and found themselves in this place. Today, their descendants number in the hundreds of thousands.

Now, 200 years after the first convicts moved in, Hyde Park Barracks is a timeless monument amid the colour and clamour of modern Sydney, the city it helped to shape and build. Visiting the Hyde Park Barracks will take you where no history book could ever go. ○

Hyde Park Barracks is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm. Admission charges apply, with Sydney Living Museums members receiving free admission. Visit the Barracks at Queens Square, Macquarie Street, Sydney. For more information, call 02 8238 2288 or visit www.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au.

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Convict-made ankle protector. Hyde Park Barracks Archaeology Collection, Sydney Living Museums. Photo © Jamie North